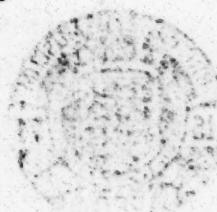


CLARISSA,
OR, THE
HISTORY
OF A
YOUNG LADY:
COMPREHENDING
THE MOST IMPORTANT CONCERNS
OF
PRIVATE LIFE.
In EIGHT VOLUMES.

By Mr. SAMUEL RICHARDSON, Author of PAMELA,
And SIR CHARLES GRANDISON.

A NEW EDITION Corrected.

VOL. IV.



DUBLIN:
PRINTED FOR P. BYRNE, J. MOORE, AND A. GRUEBER.

—
1792.

CAIRNS
HOTEL
YOUNG LADY
CONTINUATION
MAINTAINING CONCERN
PRIVATE LITERATURE
RIGHT VOLUME

THE NEW DIVISION COLLEGE,
THE GRAND DIVISION.



A New Division College.

Vol. VI.

DUBLIN:

Printed for P. DURNE, J. MORSE and A. CRUEPER.

1835.

most inflamed and vexed; the world
I have, and **THE**
H I S T O R Y
OF
Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER I.

Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE, To Miss HOWE.

Sunday night, May 7.

WHEN you reflect upon my unhappy situation, which is attended with so many indecent and even shocking circumstances, some of which my pride will not let me think of with patience; all aggravated by the contents of my cousin's affecting letter; you will not wonder, that the vapourishness which has laid hold of my heart, should rise to my pen. And yet it would be more kind, more friendly in me, to conceal from *you*, who take such a generous interest in my concerns, that worst part of my griefs, which communication and complaint cannot relieve.

But to whom can I unbosom myself but to you?— When the man who ought to be my protector, as he has brought upon me all my distresses, adds to my apprehensions; when I have not even a servant on

2 *The History of*

whose fidelity I can rely, or to whom I can break my griefs as they arise; and when his bountiful temper and gay heart, attach every one to him; and I am but a cypher to give him significance, and myself pain?—These griefs, therefore, do what I can, will sometimes burst into tears; and these mingling with my ink, will blot my paper.—And I know you will not grudge me the temporary relief.

But I shall go on in the strain I left off with in my last; when I intended rather to apologize for my melancholy. But let what I have above written, once for all, be my apology. My misfortunes have given you a call to discharge the noblest offices of the friendship which we have vowed to each other, in advice and consolation, and it would be an injury to it, and to you, to suppose it needed even that call.

She then tells Miss Howe, that now her cloaths are come, Mr. Lovelace is continually teasing her to go abroad with him in a coach, attended by whom she pleases of her own sex; either for the air, or to the public diversions.

She gives the particulars of a conversation that has passed between them on that subject, and his several proposals. But takes notice, that he says not the least word of the solemnity which he so much pressed upon her before they came to town; and which, as she observes, was necessary to give propriety to his proposals.

Now, my dear, says *she*, I cannot bear the life I live. I would be glad at my heart to be out of his reach. If I were, he should soon see the difference. If I must be humbled, it had better be by those to whom I owe duty, than by him. My aunt writes in her letter that *SHE* dare not propose any thing in my favour. You tell me, that, upon inquiry, you find that, had I not been unhappily seduced away, a change

Miss Clarissa Harlowe.

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change of measures was actually resolved upon ; and that my mamma, particularly, was determined to exert herself, for the restoration of the family peace ; and, in order to succeed the better, had thoughts of trying to engage my uncle Harlowe in her party.

Let me build on these foundations.—I can but try, my dear.—It is my duty to try all *probable* methods to restore the poor outcast to favour.—And who knows but that once indulgent uncle, who has very great weight in the family, may be induced to interpose in my behalf ?—I will give up all right and title to my grandfather's bequests, with all my heart and soul, to whom they shall think fit, in order to make my proposal palatable to my brother. And that my surrender may be effectual, I will engage never to marry.

What think you, my dear, of this expedient ? Surely they cannot resolve to renounce me for ever. If they look with impartial eyes upon what has happened, they *will* have something to blame *themselves* for, as well as *me*.

I presume, that you will be of opinion, that this expedient is worth trying. But here is my difficulty ; If I should write, my hard-hearted brother has so strongly confederated every-body against me, that my letter would be handed about from one to another, till he had hardened every one to refuse my request ; whereas, could my uncle be engaged to espouse my cause, as from *himself*, I should have some hope ; as I presume to think he would soon have my mother, and my aunt, of his party.

What therefore I am thinking of, is this—Suppose Mr. Hickman, whose good character has gained him every-body's respect, should put himself in my uncle Harlowes way ? And as if, from your knowledge of the state of things between Mr. Lovelace and me, assure him not only of the above particulars, but that

I am under no obligations, that shall hinder me from taking his directions?

I submit the whole to your discretion, whether to pursue it at all, or in what manner. But if it be pursued, and if my uncle refuses to interest himself in my favour, upon Mr. Hickman's application, as from you (for so, for obvious reasons, it must be put), I can then have no hope; and my next step, in the mind I am in, shall be, to throw myself into the protection of the ladies of his family.

It were an impiety to adopt the following lines, because it would be throwing upon the decrees of Providence a fault too much my own. But often do I revolve them, for the sake of the general similitude which they bear to my unhappy, yet undesign'd error.

*To you, great gods! I make my last appeal :
Or clear my virtues, or my crimes reveal.
If wand'ring in the maze of life I run,
And backward tread the steps I sought to shun,
Impute my errors to your own decree ;
My FEET are guilty ; but my HEART is free.*

Miss Harlowe dates again on Monday, to let Miss Howe know, that Mr. Lovelace, on observing her uneasiness, had introduced to her Mr. Mennell, Mrs. Fretchville's kinsman, who managed all her affairs [a young officer of sense and politeness, she calls him; and who gave her an account of the house and furniture, to the same effect that Mr. Lovelace had done before; as also of the melancholy way Mrs. Fretchville is in.

She tells Miss Howe, how extremely urgent Mr. Lovelace was with the gentleman, to get his spouse (as he now always calls her before company) a sight of the house: And that Mr. Mennell undertook that very afternoon to shew her all of it, except the apartment

ment Mrs. Fretchville should be in, when she went. But that she chose not to take another step till she knew how she approved of her scheme to have her uncle sounded; and what success, if try'd, it would be attended with.

Mr. Lovelace, in his humorous way, gives his friend an account of the Lady's peevishness and dejection, on receiving a letter with her cloaths. He regrets that he has lost her confidence; which he attributes to bringing her into the company of his four companions. Yet he thinks he must excuse them, and censure her for over-niceness; for that he never saw men behave better; at least not *them*.

‘ Mentioning his introducing Mr. Mennell to her, ‘ Now, Jack, says he, was it not very kind of Mr. ‘ Mennell, *Captain Mennell*, I sometimes called him ‘ (for among the military men there is no such offi- ‘ cer, thou knowest, as a *Lieutenant* or an *Ensign*) : ‘ was it not very kind in him, to come along with me ‘ so readily as he did, to satisfy my beloved about the ‘ vapourish lady and the house?

‘ But who is Captain Mennell, methinks thou ‘ askest? I never heard of such a man as Captain ‘ Mennell.

‘ Very likely. But knowest thou not young New- ‘ comb, honest Doleman’s nephew?

‘ O ho! Is it he? ‘ It is. And I have chang’d his name by virtue of ‘ my own single authority. Knowest thou not, that ‘ I am a great name-father? Preferments I bestow, ‘ both military and civil. I give estates, and take ‘ them away at my pleasure. Quality too I create. ‘ And by a still more valuable prerogative, I degrade ‘ by virtue of my own imperial will, without any ‘ other act of forfeiture than my own convenience. ‘ What a poor thing is a monarch to me!

‘ But

‘ But Mennell, now he has seen this angel of a woman, has qualms ; that’s the devil !—I shall have enough to do to keep him right. But it is the less wonder, that he should stagger, when a few hours conversation with the same lady could make four much more harden’d varlets find *hearts*.—Only, that I am confident, that I shall at last reward her virtue, if her virtue overcome me, or I should find it impossible to persevere.—For at times, I have confounded qualms myself. But say not a word of them to the Confraternity : Nor laugh at me for them myself.’

In another letter, dated Monday night, he tells his friend, That the lady keeps him at such distance, that he is sure something is going on between her and Miss Howe, notwithstanding the prohibition from Mrs. Howe to both ; and as he has thought it some degree of merit in himself to punish others for their transgressions, he thinks both these girls punishable for the breach of parental injunctions. And as to their letter-carrier, he has been inquiring into his way of living ; and finding him to be a common poacher, a deer-stealer, and warran-robber, who, under pretence of higgling, deals with a set of customers, who constantly take all he brings, whether fish, fowl, or venison, he holds himself justify’d (since Wilson’s conveyance must at present be sacred) to have him stript and robbed, and what money he has about him given to the poor ; since, if he take not money as well as letters, he shall be suspected.

‘ To serve one’s self, says he, and punish a villain at the same time, is serving public and private. The law was not made for such a man as me. And I must come at correspondencies so disobediently carried on.

‘ But,

‘ But, on second thoughts, if I could find out, that the dear creature carried any of her letters in her pockets, I can get her to a play, or to a concert, and she may have the misfortune to lose her pockets.’

‘ But how shall I find this out; since her Dorcas knows no more of her dressing or undressing than her Lovelace? For she is dressed for the day, before she appears even to her servant.—Vilely suspicious!—Upon my soul, Jack, a suspicious temper is a punishable temper. If a lady suspects a rogue in an honest man, is it not enough to make the honest man who knows it, a rogue?’

‘ But as to her pockets, I think my mind hankers after them, as the less mischievous attempt.—But they cannot hold all the letters that I should wish to see. And yet a woman’s pockets are half as deep as she is high. Ty’d round them as ballast-bags, I presume, lest the wind, as they move with full sail, from whale-ribb’d canvas, should blow away the gypsies.’

He then, in apprehension, that something is meditating between the two ladies, or that something may be set on foot to get *Miss Harlowe* out of his hands, relates several of his contrivances, and boasts of his instructions given in writing to Dorcas and to his servant Will Summers; and says, that he has provided against every possible accident, even to bring her back, if she should escape, or in case she should go abroad, and then refuse to return; and hopes so to manage, as that, should he make an attempt, whether he succeed in it, or not, he may have a pretence to detain her.

He orders Dorcas to cultivate, by all means, her lady’s favour; to lament her incapacity as to writing and reading; to shew her lady letters from pretended country relations, and beg her advice how to answer them, and to get them answer’d; to be always aiming

aiming at scrawling with a pen, lest inky fingers should give suspicions. And says, that he has given her an ivory-leaved pocket-book, with a silver pencil, that she may make memoranda on occasion.

The lady has already, he says, at Mrs. Sinclair's motion, removed her cloaths out of the trunks they came in, into an ample mahogany repository, where they will lie at full length, and which has drawers in it for linen.—‘ A repository, says he, that used to hold the richest suits which some of the nymphs put on, when they are to be dressed out, to captivate or to ape quality. For many a countess, thou knowest, has our mother equipp'd ; nay, two or three duchesses, who live upon *quality terms* with their lords. But this to such as will come up to her prie, and can make an appearance like quality themselves on the occasion : For the reputation of persons of birth must not lie at the mercy of every under-degreed sinner.’

‘ A master-key which will open every lock in this chest, is put into Dorcas's hands ; and she is to take care, when she searches for papers, before she removes any thing, to observe how it lies, that she may replace all to a hair. Sally and Polly can occasionally help to transcribe. Slow and sure with such a lady must be all my movements.’

‘ It is impossible that one so young and so inexperienced can have all her caution from herself ; the behaviour of the women so unexceptionable ; no revellings, no company ever admitted into this inner-house ; all genteel, quiet, and easy, in it ; the nymphs well-bred, and well-read ; her first disgusts to the old one got over.—It must be Miss Howe therefore, who once was in danger of being taken in by one of our class, by honest Sir George Colmar, as thou hast heard, that makes my progress difficult.’

Thou

Thou seest, Belford, by the above *precautionaries*, that I forget nothing. As the song says, it is not to be imagin'd,

*On what slight strings
Depend those things,
On which men build their glory!*

‘ So far, so good. I shall never let my goddes rest till I have first discover'd where she puts her letters, and next till I have got her to play, to a concert, or to take an airing with me of a day, or so.’

‘ I GAVE thee just now some of *my* contrivances. Dorcas, who is ever attentive to all her lady's motions, has given me some instances of her *mistress's* precautions. She wafers her letters, it seems, in two places; pricks the wafers; and then seals upon them. No doubt but those brought hither are taken the same care of. And she always examines the seals of the latter before she opens them. I must, I must, come at them. This difficulty augments my curiosity. Strange, so much as she writes, and at all hours, that not one sleepy or forgetful moment has offer'd in our favour !

‘ A fair contention, thou seest. Do not thou therefore reproach me for endeavouring to take advantage of her *tender years*. *Credulity* she has none. Am not I a *young fellow*, myself? As to her *fortune*, that's out of the question; fortune never had any other attractions for me, than to stimulate me on; and this, as I have elsewhere said, for motives not ignoble. As to *beauty*; pr'ythee, Jack, do thou, to spare my modesty, make a comparison between my Clarissa for a *woman*, and thy Lovelace for a *man*!—The only point that can admit of debate, as I conceive, is, who has most *wit*, most *circumspec-tion*: And that is what remains to be try'd.’

‘ A sad life, however, for the poor lady to live, as well as for me; that is to say, if she be not *naturally* jealous. If she be, her uneasiness is constitutional, and she cannot help it; nor will it, in that case, her. For a suspicious temper will *make* occasions for doubt, if none were to offer to her hand; and so my fair one is obliged to me for saving her the trouble of studying for these occasions.—But after all, the plain way in every affair of the human life is the best, I believe. But it is not given me to choose it. Nor am I singular in the pursuit of the more intricate paths; since there are thousands and ten thousands, besides me, who had rather fish in troubled waters than in smooth.’

LETTER II.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Tuesday, May 9.

I AM a very unhappy fellow. This lady is said to be one of the sweetest-temper'd creatures in the world: And so I thought her. But to me, she is one of the most perverse. I never was supposed to be an ill-natur'd puppy neither. How can it be? I imagin'd for a long while, that we were born to make each other happy: But, quite the contrary; we really seem to be sent to plague one another.

I will write a Comedy, I think. I have a title ready, and that's half the work. *The Quarrelsome Lovers.* 'Twill do. There's something new and striking in it. Yet, more or less, all lovers quarrel. Old Terence has taken notice of that; and observes, upon it, 'That lovers falling-out occasions lovers falling-in; and a better understanding of course. 'Tis natural that it should be so. But with us, we fall out so often,

often, without falling-in once; and a second quarrel so generally happens before a first is made up; that it is hard to guess what event our loves will be attended with. But Shakespeare says;

—*Come what come may,
Patience and time run thro' the roughest day.*

And that shall be my comfort. No man living bears crosses better than myself: But then they must be of *my own* making: And even this is a great merit, and a great excellence, think what thou wilt: Since most of the troubles, which fall to the lot of mortals, are brought upon themselves, either by their *too large* desires, or *too little* deserts. But I shall make myself a common man by-and-by: Which is what no one yet ever thought me. I will now lead to the occasion of this preamble.

I had been out. On my return, meeting Dorcas on the stairs—Your lady in her chamber, Dorcas? In the dining-room, Sir: And if ever you hope for an opportunity to come at a letter, it must be now. For at her feet I saw one lie, which, by its open'd folds, she has been reading, with a little parcel of others she is now busied with. All pulled out of her pocket, as I believe: So, Sir, you'll know where to find them another time.

I was ready to leap for joy, and instantly resolved to bring forward an expedient which I had held in petto; and entering into the dining-room, with an air of transport, I boldly clasped my arms about her, as she sat (she huddling up her papers in her handkerchief all the time, the dropt paper unseen): O my dearest life, a lucky expedient have Mr. Mennell and I hit upon, just now. In order to hasten Mrs. Fretchville to quit the house, I have agreed, if you approve of it, to entertain her cook, her housemaid, and two men-servants (about whom she was very solicitous),
til

till you are provided to your mind. And that no accommodations may be wanted, I have consented to take the household linen at an appraisement.

I am to pay down 500l. and the remainder as soon as the bills can be look'd up, and the amount of them adjusted. Thus will you have a charming house entirely ready to receive you, and any of my friends.

They will soon be with you: They will not permit you long to suspend my happy day.—And that nothing may be wanting to gratify your utmost punctilio, I will till then consent to stay here at Mrs. Sinclair's, while you reside at your new house; and leave the rest to your own generosity.

O my beloved creature, will not this be agreeable to you? I am sure it will—It must—And clasping her closer to me, I gave her a more fervent kiss than ever I had dared to give her before: But still let not my ardor overcome my discretion; for I took care to set my foot upon the letter, and scraped it farther from her, as it were behind her chair.

She was in a passion at the liberty I took. Bowing low, I begg'd her pardon; and, stooping still lower, in the same motion, took it up, and whipt it in my bosom.

Pox on me, for a puppy, a fool, a blockhead, a clumsy varlet, and a mere Jack Belford!—I thought myself a much cleverer fellow than I am!—Why could I not have been followed in by Dorcas; who might have taken it up, while I addressed her lady?

For here the letter being unfolded, I could not put it into my bosom, without alarming her ears, as my sudden motion did her eyes.—Up she flew in a moment: Traitor! Judas! her eyes flashing lightning, and a perturbation in her eager countenance, so charming—What have you taken up?—And then, what for both my ears I durst not to have done to her,

her, she made no scruple to seize the stolen letter, tho' in my bosom.

Beg-pardon apologies were all that now remained for me, on so palpable a detection. I clasped her hand, which had hold of the ravish'd paper, between mine: O my beloved creature! can you think I have not *some* curiosity? Is it possible you can be thus for ever employed; and I, loving narrative letter-writing above every other species of writing, and admiring your talent that way, should not (thus upon the dawn of my happiness, as I presume to hope) burn with a desire to be admitted into so sweet a correspondence.

Let go my hand!—stamping with her pretty foot: How dare you, Sir!—At this rate, I see—Too plainly I see—And more she could not say: But, gasping, was ready to faint, with passion and affright; the devil a bit of her accustomed gentleness to be seen in her charming face, or to be heard in her musical voice.

Having gone thus far, loth, very loth was I to lose my prize—Once more I got hold of the rumpled-up letter!—Impudent man! were her words: Stamping again: For God's sake, then it was!—I let go my prize, lest she should faint away: But had the pleasure first to find my hand within both hers, she trying to open my reluctant fingers. How near was my heart, at that moment, to my hand, throbbing to my fingers ends, to be thus familiarly, altho' angrily, treated by the charmer of my soul!

When she had got it in her possession, she flew to the door: I threw myself in her way, shut it, and, in the humblest manner, besought her to forgive me: And yet do you think the Harlowe-hearted charmer would, notwithstanding the agreeable annunciation I came in with?—No, truly! but pushing me rudely from the door, as if I had been nothing (yet do I

love

love to try, so innocently to try, her strength too!); she gaining that force through passion, which I had lost through fear; and out she shot to her own apartment [Thank my stars she could fly no further!]; and as soon as she enter'd it, in a passion still, she double-locked and double-bolted herself in.—This my comfort, on reflection, that, upon a greater offence, it cannot be worse!

I retreated to my own apartment, with my heart full. And my man Will, not being near me, gave myself a plaguy knock on the forehead, with my double fist.

And now is my charmer shut up from me: Refusing to see me; refusing her meals: Resolves *not* to see me, that's more;—Never again, if she can help it.

In the mind she is in—I hope she has said. The dear creatures, whenever they quarrel with their humble servants, should always remember this saving clause *that they may not be forsaken*.

But thinkest thou that I will not make it the subject of one of my first plots, to inform myself of the reason why all this commotion was necessary on so flight an occasion, as this would have been, were not the letters that pass between these ladies of a treasonable nature.

Wednesday Morning.

No admission to breakfast, any more than to supper. I wish this lady is not a simpleton, after all.—I have sent up in Capt. Mennell's name. A message from Capt. Mennell, Madam.

It won't do!—She is of a baby age: She cannot be—a Solomon, I was going to say, in every thing. Solomon, Jack, was the wisest man:—But didst ever hear who was the wisest woman?—I want a comparison for this lady: Cunning women and witches,

we

we read of without number. But I fancy wisdom never entered into the character of a woman. It is not a requisite of the Sex. Women, indeed, make better sovereigns than men: But why is that?—Because the women sovereigns are governed by men; the men sovereigns by women:—Charming by my soul! For hence we guess at the rudder by which both are governed. Yet, sorry puppy as thou art, thou makest light of me for my attachment to this Sex; and even of my ardors to the most excellent one of it!—

But to put wisdom out of the question, and to take *cunning* in: That is to say, To consider woman as a woman, what shall we do, if this lady has something extraordinary in her head?—Repeated charges has she given for Wilson, by a particular messenger, to send any letter directed for her, the moment it comes.

I must keep a good look out. She is not now afraid of her brother's plot. I shan't be at all surprized, if Singleton calls upon Miss Howe, as the only person who knows, or is likely to know, where Miss Harlowe is; pretending to have affairs of importance, and of particular service to her, if he can but be admitted to her speech. Of compromise, who knows, from her brother?

Then will Miss Howe warn her to keep close; then will my protection be again necessary. This will do, I believe. Any thing from Miss Howe must.

Joseph Leman is a vile fellow with her, and my implement. Joseph, honest Joseph, as I call him, may hang himself. I have play'd him off enough; and have very little further use for him. No need to wear one plot to the stumps, when I can find new ones every hour.

Nor blame me for the use I make of my talents. Who, that had such, would let 'm be idle?

Well

Well then, I will find a Singleton; that's all I have to do.

Instantly find one!—Will.—Sir—

'This moment call me hither thy cousin Paul Wheatly, just come from sea, whom thou wert recommending to my service, if I were to marry and keep a pleasure-boat.

Presto—Will's gone!—Paul will be here presently!—Presently will he be gone to Mrs. Howe's.—If Paul be Singleton's mate, coming from his captain, it will do as well as if it were Singleton himself.

Sally, a little devil, often reproaches me with the slowness of my proceedings. But in a play, does not the principal entertainment lie in the first four acts? Is not all in a manner over, when you come to the fifth? And what a vulture of a man must he be, who souses upon his prey, and in the same moment trusles and devours?

But to own the truth, I have overplotted myself. To make my work secure, as I thought, I have frightened the dear creature with my four Hottentots, and I shall be a long time, I doubt, before I can recover my lost ground. And then these cursed folks at Harlowe-Place have made her out of humour with me, with herself, and with all the world, but Miss Howe, who, no doubt, is continually adding difficulties to my other difficulties. And then I am very unwilling to have recourse to measures which these dæmons below are continually urging me to take. And the rather, as I am sure, that at last, she must be legally mine. One complete trial over, and I think I will do her noble justice.

WELL, Paul's gone!—Gone already—Has all his lessons,—A notable fellow!—Lord W.'s necessaryman was Paul before he went to sea. A more sensible rogue

rogue Paul than Joseph!—Not such a pretender to piety neither, as the other. At what a price have I bought that Joseph!—I had two to buy, in him—His conscience, as well as the man.—I believe I must punish the rascal at last: But must let him marry first: Then (tho' that may be punishment enough) as I bribed two at once in one man, I shall punish two at once in the man and his wife.—And how richly does Betty deserve it for her behaviour to my goddess?

But now I hear the rusty hinges of my beloved's door give me creaking invitation. My heart creaks and throbs with respondent trepidations: Whimsical enough tho'! For what relation has a lover's heart to a rusty pair of hinges?—But they are the hinges that open and shut the door of my beloved's bed-chamber!—Relation enough in that!

I hear not the door shut again. I shall have her commands I hope anon.—She must be mine, let me do or offer what I will. Courage whenever I assume, all is over: For should she think of escaping from hence, whether can she fly to avoid me? Her parents will not receive her: Her uncles will not entertain her: Her beloved Norton is in their direction, and cannot: Miss Howe dare not: She has not one friend in town but me: Is entirely a stranger to the town, And what then is the matter with me, that I should be thus unaccountably over-awed and tyrannized over, by a dear creature, who wants only to know how impossible it is that she should escape me, in order to be as humble to me, as she is to her persecuting relations?

Should I even make the grand attempt, and fail, and should she hate me for it, her hatred can be but temporary. She has already incurred the censure of the world. She must therefore choose to be mine, for

for the sake of soldering up her reputation in the eye of that impudent world. For who, that knows me, and knows that she has been in my power, tho' but for twenty-four hours, will think her spotless as to fact, let her inclination be what it will—And then human nature is such a well-known rogue, that every man and woman judges by what each knows of themselves, that inclination is no more to be trusted, where an opportunity is given, than I am; especially where a woman young and blooming loves a man well enough to go off with him; for such will be the world's construction in the present case.

She calls her maid Dorcas. No doubt, that I may hear her harmonious voice, and to give me an opportunity to pour out my soul at her feet; to renew all my vows; and to receive her pardon for the past offence: And then with what pleasure shall I begin upon a new score; and afterwards wipe out that; and begin another, and another; till the *last* offence passes; and there can be no other. And once, after that, to be forgiven, will be to be forgiven for ever.

THE door is again shut. Dorcas tells me, that she denies to admit me to dine with her, as I had ordered her to request for me next time she saw her. Not uncivilly, however, denies. Coming to by degrees! Nothing but the last offence, the honest wench tells me, in the language of her principals below, will do with her. The last offence is meditating. Yet this vile recreant heart of mine plays me booty.—But here I conclude; tho' the tyranness leaves me nothing to do, but read, write, and fret.

Subscription is formal between us. Besides, I am so totally hers, that I cannot say how much I am thine, or any other person's.

LETTER

LETTER III.

Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE, To Miss HOWE.

Tuesday, May 9.

IF, my dear, you approve of the application to my uncle Harlowe, I wish it may be made as soon as possible. We are quite out again. I have shut myself up from him. The offence indeed not *very* great—And yet it is too: He had like to have got a letter. One of yours. But never will I write again, or re-peruse my papers, in an apartment where he thinks himself intitled to come. He did not read a line of it. Indeed he did not. So don't be uneasy: And depend upon future caution.

Thus it was. The sun being upon my closet, and Mr. Lovelace abroad—

She then gives Miss Howe an account of his coming in by surprize upon her: of his fluttering speech: of his bold address: of her struggle with him for the letter, &c.

And now, my dear, *proceeds she*, I am more and more convinced, that I am too much in his power to make it prudent to stay with him. And if my friends *will* but give me hope—Till I can know whether they will or not, I must do what I never studied to do before in any case—that is, try to keep this difference open: And yet it will make me look little in my own eyes? because I shall mean by it more than I can own. But this is own of the consequences of a step which will be ever deplored, by

Your CL. HARLOWE.

LETTER

LETTER IV.

Miss Howe, To Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Wednesday, May 10.

I MUCH approve of your resolution to leave this man, if you can have any encouragement from your uncle. And the rather, as I have heard but within these two hours some well-attested stories of him, that shew him to be one of the worst of men as to our sex. I do assure you, my dear friend, that had he a dozen lives, if all I have heard be true, he might have forfeited them all, and been dead *twenty crimes* ago.

If ever you condescend to talk familiarly with him again, ask him after Miss Betterton, and what became of her: And if he shuffle and prevaricate, question him about Miss Lockyer.—O my dear the man's a villain!

I will have your uncle sounded, as you desire, and that out of hand. But yet I am afraid of the success; and this for several reasons. 'Tis hard to say what the sacrifice of your estate would do with some people: And yet I must not, when it comes to the test, permit you to make it.

As your Hannah continues ill, I would advise you to try to attach Dorcas to your interest. Have you not been impolitely shy of her?

I wish you could come at some of his letters. Surely a man of his negligent character cannot be always guarded. If he were, and if you cannot engage your servant, I should suspect them both. Let him be called upon at a short warning, when he is writing, or when he has papers lying about, and so surprize him into negligence.

Such inquiries, I know, are of the same nature with those we make at an inn in travelling, when we

- look

Look into every corner and closet for fear of a villain; yet should be frightened out of our wits, were we to find one. But 'tis better to detect such a one when awake and up, than be attacked by him when in bed and asleep.

I am glad you have your cloaths. But no money; no books; but a *Spira*, a *Drexelius*, and a *Practice of Piety*. Those who sent the latter, ought to have kept it for themselves.---But I must hurry myself from this subject.

You have exceedingly alarmed me by what you hint of his attempt to get one of my letters. I am assured by my new informant, that he is the head of a gang of wretches [Those he brought you among, no doubt were some of them], who join together to betray innocent creatures, and to support one another when they have done, by violence: And were he to come at the knowledge of the freedoms I take with him, I should be afraid to stir out without a guard.

I am sorry to tell you, that I have reason to think, that your brother has not laid aside his foolish plot. A sun-burnt, sailor-looking fellow was with me just now, pretending great service to you from Captain Singleton, could he be admitted to your speech. I pleaded ignorance. The fellow was too well instructed for me to get any thing out of him.

I wept for two hours incessantly, on reading yours, which inclosed that from your cousin Morden. My dearest creature do not desert yourself: Let your Anna Howe obey the call of that friendship, which has united us as one soul, and endeavour to give you consolation.

I wonder not at the melancholy reflections you so often cast upon yourself in your letters, for the step you have been forced upon, on one hand, and tricked into on the other. A strange fatality! As if it were designed to shew the vanity of all human prudence.

I wish,

I wish, my dear, as you hint, that both you and I have not too much pridied ourselves in a perhaps too conscious superiority over others—But I will stop—How apt are weak minds to look out for judgments in an extraordinary event! 'Tis so far right, that it is better, and safer, and juster, to arraign ourselves, or our dearest friends, than Providence; which must always have wise ends to answer in its dispensations.

But do not talk, as in one of your former, of being a warning *only*.—You will be as excellent an example, as ever you hoped to be, as well as a warning: And that will make your story, to all that shall come to know it, of double efficacy: For were it that such a merit as yours could not ensure to herself noble and generous usage from a liberine heart, who will expect any tolerable behaviour from men of his character?

If you think yourself inexcusable for taking a step that put you into the way of delusion, without any intention to go off with him, what must those giddy creatures think of themselves, who, without half your provocations and inducements, and without any regard to decorum, leap walls, drop from windows, and steal away from their parents house, to the seducer bed, in the same day.

Again, if You are so ready to accuse yourself for dispensing with the prohibitions of the most unreasonable parents, which yet were but half-prohibitions at first, what ought those to do, who wilfully shut their ears to the advice of the most reasonable? and that, perhaps, where apparent ruin, or undoubted inconvenience, is the consequence of the predetermined rashness?

And, lastly, to all who will know your story, you will be an excellent *example* of watchfulness, and of that caution and reserve, by which a prudent person, who has been supposed to be a little misled, endeavours to mend her error; and, never once losing sight of

of her duty, does all in her power to recover the path she has been rather driven out of, than chosen to swerve from.

Come, come, my dearest friend, consider but these things ; and steadily, without desponding, pursue your earnest purposes to amend what you think has been amiss ; and it may not be a misfortune in the end, that you have erred ; especially as so little of your will is in your error.

And, indeed, I must say, that I use the words *misled*, and *error*, and such-like, only in compliment to your own too ready self-accusations, and to the opinion of one to whom I owe duty : For I think in my conscience, that every part of your conduct is defensible ; and that those only are blameable, who have no other way to clear themselves, than by condemning you.

I expect, however, that such melancholy reflections, as drop from your pen but too often, will mingle with all your future pleasures, were you to marry Lovelace, and were he to make the best of husbands.

You was immensely happy, above the happiness of a mortal creature, before you knew him : Every body almost worshipped you : Envy itself, which has of late reared up its venomous head against you, was awed by your superior worthiness, into silence and admiration. You was the soul of every company where you visited : Your elders have I seen declining to offer their opinions upon a subject, till you had delivered yours ; often to save themselves the mortification of retracting *theirs*, when they heard *yours*. Yet, in all this, your sweetnes of manners, your humility and affability, caused the subscription every one made to your sentiments, and to your superiority, to be equally unfeigned and unhesitating ; for they saw, that their applause, and the preference they gave

gave you to themselves, subjected not themselves to insults, nor exalted you into any visible triumph over them ; for you had always something to say, on every point you carried, that raised the yielding heart, and left every-one pleased and satisfied with themselves, tho' they carried not off the palm.

Your works were shewn or referred to, wherever fine works were talked of. No-body had any but an inferior and second-hand praise for diligence, for œconomy, for reading, for writing, for memory, for facility in learning every-thing laudable, and even for the more envied graces of person and dress, and an all-surpassing elegance in both, where you were known, and those subjects talked of.

The poor blessed you every step you trod : The rich thought you their honour, and took a pride, that they were not obliged to descend from their own class, for an example that did credit to it.

Tho' all men wished for you, and sought you, young as you was, yet, had not those, who were brought to address you, been encouraged out of sordid and spiteful views to attempt your presence, not one of them would have dared to lift up his eyes to you.

Thus happy in all about you, thus making happy all within your circle, could you think that nothing would happen to you, to convince you, that you were not to be exempted from the common lot ?— To convince you, that you were not *absolutely* perfect ; and that you must not expect to pass thro' life, without trial, temptation, and misfortune ?

Indeed, it must be owned, that no trial, no temptation, worthy of you, could have well attacked you sooner, or more effectually, than those heavy ones have done : For every common case you were superior to : It must be some man, or some worse spirit in the shape of one, that, formed on purpose, was

to

to be sent to invade you ; while as many other such spirits, as there are persons in your family, were permitted to take possession, severally, in one dark hour, of the heart of every one of it, there to sit perching, perhaps, and directing every motion to the motions of the seducer without, in order to irritate, to provoke, to push you forward to meet him.

So, upon the whole, there seems, as I have often said, a kind of fate in your error, if an error ; and this, perhaps, admitted, for the sake of a better example to be collected from your *sufferings*, than could have been given, had you *never erred* : For, my dear, ADVERSITY is your SHINING-TIME : I see evidently, that it must call forth graces and beauties, that could not have been seen in a run of that prosperous fortune which attended you from your cradle till now ; admirably as you became, and, as we all thought, greatly as you deserved, that prosperity.

All the matter is, the trial must be grievous to you : It is to *me* : It is to all who love you, and looked upon you as one set aloft to be admired and imitated, and not as a mark, as you have lately found, for envy to shoot its shafts at.

Let what I have written above, have its due weight with you, my dear ; and then, as warm imaginations are not without a mixture of enthusiasm, your Anna Howe, who, on a reperusal of it, imagines it to be in a style superior to her usual style, will be ready to flatter herself, that she has been in a manner inspired with the hints that have comforted and raised the dejected heart of her suffering friend ; who, from such hard trials, in a bloom so tender, may find at times her spirits sunk too low to enable her to pervade the surrounding darkness, which conceals from her the hopeful dawning of the better day which awaits her.

I will add no more at present, than that I am

Your ever faithful and affectionate

VOL. IV.

C

ANNA HOWE.

LETTER V.

Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE, To Miss HOWE.

Friday, May 12.

I MUST be silent, my exalted friend, under praises that oppress my heart with a consciousness of not deserving them; at the same time, that the generous design of those praises raises and comforts it: For it is a charming thing to stand high in the opinion of those we love: And to find that there are souls that can carry their friendships beyond accidents, beyond body, and ties of blood. Whatever, my dearest creature, is my shining-time, the adversity of a friend is yours. And it would be almost a fault in me to regret those afflictions, which give you an opportunity so gloriously to exert those qualities, which not only ennoble our sex, but dignify human nature.

But let me proceed to subjects less agreeable.

I am sorry you have reason to think Singleton's projects are not at an end. But who knows what the sailor had to propose?— Yet had any good been intended me, this method would hardly have been fallen upon.

Depend upon it, my dear, your letters shall be safe.

I have made a handle of Mr. Lovelace's bold attempt and freedom, as I told you I would, to keep him ever since at distance, that I may have an opportunity to see the success of the application to my uncle, and to be at liberty to embrace any favourable overtures that may arise from it. Yet he has been very importunate, and twice brought Mr. Mennell from Mrs. Fretchville, to talk about the house. If I should be obliged to make up with him again, I shall think I am always doing myself a spight.

As

As to what you mention of his newly-detected crimes; and your advice to attach Dorcas; and to come at some of his letters; these things will require more or less of my attention, as I may have favour, or not, from my uncle Harlowe.

I am sorry for poor Hannah's continued illness. Pray, my dear, inform yourself, for me, whether she wants any thing that befits her case.

I will not close this letter till to-morrow is over; for I am resolv'd to go to church; and this as well for the sake of my duty, as to see, if I am at liberty to go out when I please, without being attended or accompanied.

Sunday, May 14.

I HAVE not been able to avoid a short debate with Mr. Lovelace. I had order'd a coach to the door. When I had notice that it was come, I went out of my chamber, to go to it; but met him dressed on the stairs head, with a book in his hand, but without his hat and sword.—He asked, with an air very solemn, yet respectful, if I were going abroad. I told him I was. He desired leave to attend me, if I were going to church. I refused him. And then he complained heavily of my treatment of him; and declared that he would not live such another week, as the past, for the world.

I owned to him very frankly, that I had made an application to my friends; and that I was resolv'd to keep myself to myself till I knew the issue of it.

He coloured, and seemed surprized. But checking himself in something he was going to say, he pleaded my danger from Singleton, and again desired to attend me.

And then he told me, that Mrs. Fretchville had desired to continue a fortnight longer in the house. She found, said he, that I was unable to determine

about entering upon it ; and now who knows when such a vapourish creature will come to a resolution ? This, Madam, has been an unhappy week ; for had I not stood upon such bad terms with you, you might have been now mistress of that house ; and probably had my cousin Montague, if not my aunt Lawrence, actually with you.

And so, Sir, taking all you say for granted, your cousin Montague cannot come to Mrs. Sinclair's : What, pray, is her objection to Mrs. Sinclair's ? Is this house fit for me to live in a month or two, and not fit for any of your relations for a few days ? And Mrs. Fretchville has taken more time too—And so, pushing by him, I hurried down stairs.

He called to Dorcas to bring him his sword and hat ; and following me down into the passage, placed himself between me and the door ; and again besought me to permit him to attend me.

Mrs. Sinclair came out at that instant, and asked me, if I did not choose a dish of chocolate ?

I wish, Mrs. Sinclair, said I, you would take this man in with you to your chocolate. I don't know whether I am at liberty to stir out without his leave or not—Then turning to him, I asked, If he kept me there his prisoner ?

Dorcas just then bringing him his sword and hat, he opened the street-door, and taking my resisting hand, led me, in a very obsequious manner, to the coach. People passing by, stopt, stared, and whisper'd—But he is so graceful in his person and dress, that he generally takes every eye.

I was uneasy to be so gaz'd at ; and he stepp'd in after me, and the coachman drove to St. Paul's.

He was very full of affiduities all the way ; while I was as reserv'd as possible : And when I return'd, din'd, as I had done the greatest part of the week, by myself.

He told me, upon my resolving to do so, that altho' he would continue his passive observance, till I knew the issue of my application; yet I must expect, that then I should never rest one moment till I had fixed his happy day: For that his very soul was fretted with my flights, resentments, and delays.

A wretch! when I can say, to my infinite regret, on a *double* account, that all he complains of is owing to himself!

O that I may have good tidings from my uncle!

Adieu, my dearest friend! — This shall lie ready for an exchange, as I hope for one to-morrow from you, that will decide, as I may say, the destiny of

Your CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER VI.

Miss Howe, To Mrs. JUDITH NORTON.

Good Mrs. Norton,

Thursday, May 11.

CANNOT you, without naming me as an adviser, who am hated by the family, contrive away to let Mrs. Harlowe know, that in an accidental conversation with me, you had been assured, that my beloved friend pipes after a reconciliation with her relations: That she has hitherto, in hopes of it, refused to enter into any obligations, that shall be in the least an hindrance to it: That she would fain avoid giving Mr. Lovelace a right to make her family uneasy, in relation to her grandfather's estate: That all she wishes for still, is to be indulged in her choice of a single life, and, on that condition, would make her father's pleasure hers with regard to that estate: That Mr. Lovelace is continually pressing her to marry him; and all his friends likewise: But that I am sure, she has so little liking to the man, because of his faulty

morals, and of her relations antipathy to him, that if she had any hope given her of a reconciliation, she would forego all thoughts of him, and put herself into her father's protection. But that their resolution must be speedy ; for otherwise she would find herself obliged to give way to his pressing intreaties ; and it might then be out of her power to prevent disagreeable litigations.

I do assure you, Mrs. Norton, upon my honour, that our dearest friend knows nothing of this procedure of mine : And therefore it is proper to acquaint you, in confidence, with my grounds for it.—These are they :—

She had desired me to let Mr. Hickman drop hints to the above effect to her uncle Harlowe ; but indirectly, as from *himself*, lest, if the application should not be attended with success ; and Mr. Lovelace (who already takes it ill, that he has so little of her favour) come to know it, she may be deprived of every protection, and be perhaps subjected to great inconveniences from so haughty a spirit.

Having this authority from her ; and being very solicitous about the success of the application, I thought, that if the weight of so good a wife, mother, and sister, as Mrs. Harlowe is known to be, were thrown into the same scale, with that of Mr. John Harlowe (supposing he *could* be engaged) it could hardly fail of making a due impression.

Mr. Hickman will see Mr. Harlowe to-morrow ; By that time you may see Mrs. Harlowe. If Mr. Hickman finds the old gentleman favourable, he will tell him, that you will have seen Mrs. Harlowe upon the same account ; and will advise him to join in consultation with her how best to proceed to melt the most obdurate hearts in the world.

This is the fair state of the matter, and my true motive for writing to you. I leave all therefore to

your

your discretion: And most heartily wish success to it; being of opinion that Mr. Lovelace cannot possibly deserve our admirable friend: Nor, indeed, know I the man who can.

Pray, acquaint me, by a line, of the result of your kind interposition. If it prove not such as may be reasonably hoped for, our dear friend shall know nothing of this step from me; and pray let her not from you. For, in that case, it would only give deeper grief to an heart already too much afflicted. I am, dear and worthy Mrs. Norton,

Your true friend,

ANNA HOWE.

LETTER VII.

Mrs. Norton, To Miss Howe.

Dear Madam,

Saturday, May 13.

MY heart is almost broken to be obliged to let you know, that such is the situation of things in the family of my ever-dear Miss Harlowe, that there can be at present no success expected from any application in her favour. Her poor mother is to be pity'd. I have a most affecting letter from her; but must not communicate it to you; and she forbids me to let it be known that she writes upon the subject; although she is compelled, as it were, to do it, for the ease of her own heart. I mention it therefore in confidence.

I hope in God that my beloved Miss has preserved her honour inviolate. I hope there is not a man breathing, who could attempt a sacrilege so detestable. I have no apprehension of a failure in a virtue so established: God for ever keep so pure a heart out of the reach of surprizes and violence! Ease, dear Madam, I beseech, you, my over-anxious heart, by one line, by the bearer; altho' but by one line, to acquaint me,

as surely you can, that her honour is unsully'd! If it be not, adieu to all the comforts this life can give: Since none will it be able to afford

To the poor JUDITH NORTON.

LETTER VIII.

Miss Howe, To Mrs. JUDITH NORTON.

Dear good Woman, Saturday Evening, May 13.

YOUR beloved's honour is inviolate!—*Must* be inviolate! And *will* be so, in spite of men and devils. Could I have had hope of a reconciliation, all my view was, that she should not have had this man!—All that can be said now is, She must run the risk of a bad husband: She of whom no man living is worthy.

You pity her mother!—So don't *I*!—I pity nobody, that puts it out of their power to shew maternal love, and humanity, in order to patch up for themselves a precarious and sorry quiet, which every blast of wind shall disturb!

I hate tyrants in every form and shape: But paternal and maternal tyrants are the worst of all: For they can have no bowels.

I repeat, that I pity *none* of them!—My beloved and your beloved *only* deserves pity. She had never been in the hands of this man, but for them. She is quite blameless. You don't know all her story. Were I to tell you she had no intention to go off with this man, it would avail her nothing. It would only condemn those who drove her to extremities; and him, who now must be her refuge. I am

Your sincere friend and servant,

ANNA HOWE.

LETTER

LETTER IX.

Mrs. HARLOWE, To Mrs. NORTON.

[*Not communicated till the history came to be compiled.*]

Saturday, May 13.

I RETURN an answer in writing, as I promised, to your communication. But take no notice, that I do write, either to my Bella's Betty, who I understand, sometimes visits you, or to the poor wretch herself; nor to any-body. I charge you don't. My heart is full. Writing may give some vent to my griefs, and perhaps I may write what lies most upon my heart, without confining myself to the present subject.

You know how dear this ingrateful creature ever was to us all. You know how sincerely we joined with every one of those who ever had seen her, or conversed with her, to praise and admire her; and exceeded in our praise even the bounds of that modesty, which, because she was our own, should have restrained us; being of opinion, that to have been silent in the praise of so apparent a merit, must rather have argued blindness or affectation in us, than that we should incur the censure of vain partiality to our own.

When therefore any-body congratulated us on such a daughter, we received their congratulations without any diminution. If it was said, You are happy in this child, we owned, that no parents ever were happier in a child. If more particularly they praised her dutiful behaviour to us, we said, She knew not how to offend. If it was said, Miss Clarissa Harlowe has

a wit and penetration beyond her years ; we, instead of disallowing it, would add,—And a judgment no less extraordinary than her wit. If her prudence was praised, and a forethought, which every one saw supply'd what only years and experience gave to others ; Nobody need to scruple taking lessons from Miss Clarissa Harlowe, was our proud answer.

To give me, O forgive me, my dear Norton—But I know you will—For yours, when good, was this child, and your glory as well as mine !

But have you not heard strangers, as she passed to and from church, stop to praise the angel of a creature, as they called her ; when it was enough for those who knew who she was, to cry, *Why, it is Miss Clarissa Harlowe !*—As if every-body were obliged to know, or to have heard of Miss Clarissa Harlowe, and of her excellencies. While, accustom'd to praise it was too familiar to her, to cause her to alter either her look or her pace.

For my own part, I could not stifle a pleasure that had perhaps a faulty vanity for its foundation, whenever I was spoken of, or addressed to, as the mother of so sweet a child : Mr. Harlowe and I, all the time, loving each other the better for the share each had in such a daughter.

Still, still, indulge the fond, the overflowing heart of a mother ! I could dwell for ever upon the remembrance of what she *was*, would but that remembrance banish from my mind what she *is* !

In her bosom, young as she was, could I repose all my griefs—Sure of receiving from *her* prudence, advice as well as comfort : And both insinuated in so humble, in so dutiful a manner, that it was impossible to take those exceptions which the distance of years and character between a mother and a daughter, would, from any other daughter, have made one apprehensive of. She was our glory when abroad, our

delight

delight when at home. Every-body was even covetous of her company ; and we grudg'd her to our brothers Harlowe, and to our sister and brother Hervey.—No other contention among us, then, but who should be favoured by her next.—No chiding ever knew she from us, but the chiding of lovers, when she was for shutting herself up too long together from us, in pursuit of those charming amusements, and useful employments, which, however, the whole family was the better for.

Our other children had reason, good children as they always were, to think themselves neglected. But they likewise were so sensible of their sister's superiority, and of the honour she reflected upon the whole family, that they confessed themselves eclipsed, without envying the eclipsed. Indeed there was not any-body so equal with her, in their own opinions, as to envy what all aspired but to emulate.—The dear creature, you know, my Norton, gave an eminence to us all: And now, that she has left us, so disgracefully left us ! we are stript of our ornament, and are but a common family !

Then her acquirements. Her skill in music, her fine needleworks, her elegance in dress ; for which she was so much admired, that the neighbouring ladies used to say, that they need not fetch fashions from London ; since whatever Miss Clarissa Harlowe wore, was the *best* fashion, because her choice of *natural* beauties set those of *art* far behind them. Her genteel ease, and fine turn of person ; her deep reading ; and these, joined to her open manners, and her cheerful modesty—O my good Norton, what a sweet child was *once* my Clary Harlowe !

This, and more, *you* knew her to be : For many of her excellencies were owing to yourself ; and with the milk you gave her, you gave her what no other nurse in the world could give her.

And

And do you think, my worthy woman, do you think, that the wilful lapse of such a child is to be forgiven? Can she herself think, that she deserves not the severest punishment for the abuse of such talents as were intrusted to her?

Her fault was a fault of premeditation, of cunning, of contrivance. She has deceived every body's expectations. Her whole sex, as well as the family she sprung from, is disgraced by it.

Would any-body ever have believed, that such a young creature as this, who had by her advice saved even her over-lively friend from marrying a fop, and a libertine, would herself have gone off with one of the vilest and most notorious of libertines? A man whose character she knew; and knew to be worse than his, she saved her friend from; whose vices she was warned of: One who had had her brother's life in his hands; and who constantly set our whole family at defiance.

Think for me, my good Norton; think what my unhappiness must be, both as a wife and a mother. What restless days, what sleepless nights; yet my own rankling anguish endeavoured to be smoothed over, to soften the anguish of fiercer spirits, and to keep them from blazing out to further mischief. O this naughty, naughty girl! who knew so well what she did; and who could look so far into consequences, that we thought she would have dy'd, rather than have done as she has done!

Her known character for prudence leaves no plea for excuse. How then can I offer to plead for her, if thro' motherly indulgence, I would forgive her myself?—And have we not, moreover, suffer'd all the disgrace that can befall us? Has not she?

If now, she has so little liking to his morals, had she not reason before to have as little? Or has she suffered by him in her own person?—O my good woman,

man, I doubt—I doubt—Will not the character of the man make one doubt an angel, if once in his power? The world will think the worst. I am told it *does*. So likewise her father fears; her brother hears; and what can I do?

Our *antipathy* to him she knew before, as well as his character. These therefore cannot be new motives without a new reason.—O my dear Mrs. Norton, how shall *I*, how can *you*, support ourselves under the apprehensions that these thoughts lead to, of my Clary Harlowe, and your Clary Harlowe!

He continually pressing her, you say, to marry him. His friends likewise. She has reason, no doubt she has reason, for this application to us: And her crime is gloss'd over, to bring her to us with new disgrace!

—Whither, whither, does one guilty step lead the misguided heart!—And now truly, to save a stubborn spirit, we are only to be *founded*, that the application may be retracted or deny'd!

Upon the whole: Were I inclined to plead for her, it is *now* the most improper of all times. *Now* that my brother Harlowe has discouraged (as he last night came hither on purpose to tell us) Mr. Hickman's insinuated application; and been applauded for it. *Now*, that my brother Antony is intending to carry his great fortune, thro' her fault, into another family:—She expecting, no doubt, herself, to be put into her grandfather's estate, in consequence of a reconciliation, and as a reward for her fault: And insisting still upon terms that she offer'd before, and were rejected.—Not thro' my fault, I am sure, rejected.

From all these things, you will return such an answer as the case requires.—It might cost me the peace of my whole life, at this *time*, to move for her. God forgive her:—If I do, no-body else will. And let it be for your own sake, as well as mine, a secret that you and I have enter'd upon this subject. And I de-

fire you not to touch upon it again but by particular permission: For, O my dear good woman, it sets my heart a bleeding in as many streams as there are veins in it!

Yet think me not impenetrable by a proper contrition and remorse! But what a torment is it to have a will without a power!

Adieu! adieu! God give us both comfort; and to the once dear—the ever dear creature (for can a mother forget her child?) repentance, deep repentance! And as little suffering as may befit his blessed will, and her grievous fault, prays

Your real friend

CHARLOTTE HARLOWE.

LETTER X.

Miss Howe, To Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Sunday, May 14.

HOW it is now, my dear, between you and Mr. Lovelace, I cannot tell. But wicked as the man is, I am afraid he must be your lord and master.

I called him by several very hard names in my last. I had but just heard some vilenesses, when I sat down to write; so my indignation was raised. But on inquiry, and recollection, I find that the facts laid to his charge were all of them committed some time ago; not since he has had *strong* hopes of your favour. This is saying something for him. His generous behaviour to the inn-keeper's daughter, is a more recent instance to his credit; to say nothing of the universal good character he has as a kind landlord. And then I approve much of the motion he made to put you in possession of Mrs. Fretchville's house, while he continues at the other widow's, till you agree that one house shall hold you. I wish this was done. Be

sure

sure you embrace this offer, if you do not soon meet at the altar, and get one of his cousins with you.

Were you once marry'd, I should think you cannot be *very* unhappy, tho' you may not be so happy with him as you deserve to be. The stake he has in his country, and his reverions: The care he takes of his affairs; his freedom from obligation; nay, his pride, with your merit, must be a tolerable security for you, I should think. Tho' particulars of his wickedness, as they come to my knowledge, hurt and incense me; yet after all, when I give myself time to reflect, all that I have heard of him, to his disadvantage, was comprehended in the general character given of him long ago, by his uncle's and his own dismis'd bailiff, and which was confirm'd to you by Mrs. Greme.

You can have nothing therefore, I think, to be deeply concerned about, but his future good, and the bad example he may hereafter set to his own family. These indeed are very just concerns: But were you to *leave* him now, either *with* or *without* his consent, his fortune and alliances so considerable, his person and address so engaging (every-one excusing you now on those accounts, and because of your relations follies), it would have a very ill appearance for your reputation. I cannot therefore, on the most deliberate consideration, advise you to think of that, while you have no reason to doubt his honour. May eternal vengeance pursue the villain, if he gives room for an apprehension of his nature!

Yet his teasing ways are intolerable: His acquiescence with your flight delays, and his resignedness to the distance you now keep him at (for a fault so much slighter, than the punishment), are unaccountable: He doubts your love of *him*, that is very probable; but you have reason to be surprised at *his* want

of

of ardor ; a blessing so great, within his *reach*, as I may say.

By the time you have read to this place, you will have no doubt of what has been the issue of the conference between the *Two Gentlemen*. I am equally shock'd, and enraged against them All : Against them *All*, I say ; for I have try'd your good Norton's weight with your mother, to the same purpose as the gentleman sounded your uncle.—Never were there such determin'd brutes in the world : Why should I mince the matter ? Yet would I fain, methinks, make an exception for your mother.

Your uncle will have it, that you are ruin'd. ' He can believe every-thing bad of a creature, who could run away with a man—With such a one especially as Lovelace. They all *expected* applications from you, when some heavy distress had fallen upon you.—But they were all resolved not to stir an inch in your favour ; no, not to save your life !'

My dearest soul ! resolve to assert your right.—Claim your own, and go and live upon it, as you ought. Then, if you marry not, how will the wretches creep to you, for your reverisionary dispositions !

You were accused (as in your aunt's letter ' of premeditation and contrivance in your escape.' Instead of pitying *you*, the mediating person was called upon ' to pity *them* ; who, once, he said, doted upon ' you : Who took no joy but in your presence : Who ' devour'd your words as you spoke them : Who trod ' over again your footsteps, as you walked before ' them.'—And I know not what of this sort.

Upon the whole, it is now evident to me, and so it must be to you, when you read this letter, that you have but one choice. And the sooner you make it the better.—Shall we suppose that it is not in your

power

power to make it?—I cannot have patience to suppose that.

I am concern'd, methinks, to know how you will do to condescend, now you see you must be his, after you have kept him at such a distance; and for the revenge his pride may put him upon taking for it.—But let me tell you, that if my going up, and sharing fortunes with you, will prevent such a noble creature from stooping too low; much more, were it likely to prevent your ruin, I would not hesitate a moment about it. What's the whole world to me, weigh'd against such a friendship as ours?—Think you, that any of the enjoyments of this life, could be enjoyments to me, were such a friend as you to be involved in calamities, which I could either relieve her from, or alleviate, by giving them up? And what in saying this, and acting up to it, do I offer you, but the fruits of a friendship your worth has created?

Excuse my warmth of expression. The warmth of my heart wants none. I am enraged at your relations; for, bad as what I have mentioned is, I have not told you all; nor now, perhaps, ever will:—I am angry at my own mother's narrowness of mind, and adherence to old notions indiscriminately—And I am exasperated against your foolish, your low-vanity'd Lovelace!—But let us stoop to take the wretch as he is, and make the best of him, since you are destin'd to stoop, to keep grovelers and worldlings in countenaace. He has not been guilty of direct indecency to you. Nor *dare* he. Not so much of a devil as that comes to neither!—Had he such villainous intentions, so much in his power as you are, they would have shewn themselves before now to such a penetrating and vigilant eye, and to such a pure heart as yours. Let us save the wretch then, if we can, tho' we foil our singers in lifting him up from his dirt.

There

There is yet, to a person of your fortune and independence, a good deal to do, if you enter upon those terms, which *ought* to be enter'd upon. I don't find that he has once talked of settlements ; much less of the licence. It is hard ! but as your evil destiny has thrown you out of all other protection and mediation, you must be father, mother, uncle to yourself ; and enter upon the requisite points for yourself. Indeed you must. Your situation requires it. What room for delicacy now ? Or would you have *me* write to the wretch ? Yet that would be the same thing, as if you were to write yourself. Yet write you should, I think, if you cannot speak. But speaking is certainly best : For words leave no traces ; they pass as breath ; and mingle with air ; and may be explained with latitude. But the pen is a witness on record.

I know the gentleness of your spirit ; I know the laudable pride of your heart ; and the just notion you have of the dignity of our sex, in these delicate points. But once more, all this is nothing now : Your honour is concerned, that the dignity I speak of, should not be stood upon.

‘ Mr. Lovelace,’ would I say ; yet hate the foolish fellow, for his low, his stupid pride, in wishing to triumph over the dignity of his own wife — ‘ I am deprived, by your means, of every friend I have in the world. In what light am I to look upon *you* ? I have well considered of every thing : You have made some people, much against my liking, think me a *wife* : Others know I am not married ; nor do I desire any body should believe I *am*. Do you think your being here in the same house with me, can be to my reputation ? — You talk to me of Mrs. Fretchville’s house — [This will bring him to renew his last discourse on that subject, if he does not revive it of himself.] ‘ If Mrs. Fretchville knows not her own mind, what is her house to me : You talked

talked of bringing up your cousin Montague to bear me company: If my brother's schemes be your pretence for not going yourself to fetch her, you can write to her.—I insist upon bringing these two points to an issue: Off or on, ought to be indifferent to me, if so to them.'

Such a declaration must bring all forward. There are twenty ways, my dear, that you would find out to advise another how to act in your circumstances. He will disdain, from his native insolence, to have it thought he has *any-body* to consult. Well then, will he not be obliged to declare himself? And if he does, no delays on your side, I beseech you. Give him the day: Let it be a short one. It would be derogating from your own merit, and honour too, let me tell you, even altho' he should not be so explicit as he ought to be, to seem but to doubt his meaning; and to wait for that explanation which I should for ever despise him for, if he makes necessary. Twice already have you, my dear, if not oftner, *modestly'd* away such opportunities as you ought not to have slipt.—As to settlements, if they come not in naturally, ev'n leave them to his own justice, and to the justice of his family. And there's an end of the matter.

This is my advice: Mend it, as circumstances offer, and follow *your own*. But Indeed, my dear, this, or something like it, would I do. As witness,

Your ANNA HOWE.

Inclosed in the above.

I MUST trouble you with my concerns, tho' your own are so heavy upon you.—A piece of news I have to tell you. Your uncle Antony is despised to marry.—With whom think you? With my mamma. True indeed. Your family know it. All is laid with redoubled malice at your door. And there the old soul himself lays it.

Take

Take no notice of this intelligence, not so much as in your letters to me, for fear of accidents.

I think it can't do. But were I to provoke my mother, that might afford a pretence. Else, I should have been with you before now, I fancy.

The first likelihood that appears to me of encouragement, I dismiss Hickman, that's certain. If my mother disoblige me in so important an article, I shan't think of obliging her in such another. It is impossible, surely, that the desire of popping me off to that honest man can be with such a view.

I repeat, that it cannot come to any thing. But these *widows*—Then such a love in us all, both old and young, of being courted and admired!—And so irresistible to their *elderships* to be flatter'd, that all power is not over with them; but that they may still class and prank it with their daughters. It vexed me heartily to have her tell me of this proposal with self-complaisant simperings; and yet she affected to speak of it, as if she had no intention to encourage it.

These antiquated batchelors, old before they think themselves so, imagine, that when they have once persuaded *themselves*, they have nothing else to do, but to make their minds known to the lady. His overgrown fortune is indeed a bait—a tempting one. A saucy daughter to be got rid of! The memory of the father of that daughter not precious enough to weigh!—But let him advance if he dare—Let her encourage—But I hope she won't.

Excuse me, my dear, I am nettled. They have fearfully rumpled my gorget. You'll think me faulty. So I won't put my name to this separate paper. Other hands may resemble mine. You did not see me write it.

LETTER

LETTER XI.

Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE, To Miss Howe.

Monday, P. M. May 15.

NOW indeed, is it evident, my best, my only friend, that I have but one choice to make. And now do I find, that I have carried my resentment against this man too far; since now I am to appear as if under an obligation to his patience with me for a conduct, that, perhaps, he will think, if not humoursome and childish, plainly demonstrative of my little esteem of him; of but a secondary esteem at least, where before his pride, rather than his merit, had made him expect a *first*. O my dear!—to be under obligation to, and to be cast upon a man, that is not a *generous* man!—That is, indeed, a *cruel* man!—That is capable of creating a distress to a young creature, who by her evil destiny, is thrown into his power; and then of *enjoying* it, as I may say! [I verily think I may say so, of this savage!]—What a fate is mine!

You give me, my dear, good advice, as to the peremptory manner in which I ought to treat him: But do you consider to whom it is that you give that advice?

The occasion for it should never have been given by me, of all creatures; for I am unequal, utterly unequal to it!—What, *I*, to challenge a man for a husband!—*I*, to exert myself to quicken the delayer in his resolutions! And, having lost an opportunity, to begin to try to recal it, as *from myself*, and *for myself*!—To threaten him, as I may say, into the marriage-state!—O my dear! if this be right to be done, how difficult is it, where Modesty and Self (or where Pride, if you please) is concerned to do that right?

right? Or, to express myself in your words, to be father, mother, uncle, to myself!—Especially where one thinks a triumph over one is intended.—Do, my dear, advise me, persuade me, to renounce the man for ever: And then I will for ever renounce him!

You say you have tried Mrs. Norton's weight with my mamma.—Bad as the returns are which my application by Mr. Hickman has met with, you tell me, you have not acquainted me with all the bad; nor now, perhaps, ever will. But why so, my dear? what *is* the bad, what *can* be the bad, which now you will never tell me of?—What worse, than renounce me! and for ever! ‘ My uncle, you say, believes me ruin'd: He declares, that he can believe every thing bad of a creature, who could run away with a man: And they have all made a resolution, not to stir an inch in my favour; no, not to save my life.’

Have you worse than this, my dear, behind?—Surely my father has not renewed his dreadful malediction!—Surely, if so, my mamma has not joined in it! Have my uncles given it their sanction, and made it a family act? What, my dear, is the worst, that you will leave for ever unrevealed?

O Lovelace! why comest thou not just now; while these black prospects are before me? For now, couldst thou look into my heart, wouldst thou see a distress worthy of thy barbarous triumph!

I was forced to quit my pen.

And you say you have try'd Mrs. Norton's weight with my mamma!

What *is* done, cannot be help'd: But I wish you had not taken any step, in a matter so very concerning to me, without first consulting me.—Forgive me, my dear;—but that high-soul'd and noble friendship, which you avow with so obliging, and so uncommon a warmth, at the same time, that it is the subject

ject of my grateful admiration, is no less, because of its fervor, the ground of my apprehension!

Well, but, now to look forward, you are of opinion, that I must be his: And that I cannot leave him with reputation to myself, whether with or without his consent. I must, if so, make the best of the bad matter.

He went out in the morning; intending not to return to dinner, unless (as he sent me word) I would admit him to dine with me.

I excused myself. The man, whose anger is now to be of such high importance to me, was, it seems, displeased.

As he, as well as I, expected, that I should receive a letter from you this day, by Collins. I suppose he will not be long before he returns; and then, possibly, he is to be mighty stately, mighty *mannish*, mighty *coy* if you please! And then I must be very humble, very submissive, and try to whine myself into his good graces: With downcast eye, if not by speech, beg his forgiveness for the distance I have so perversely kept him at!—Yes, I warrant you!—But I'll see how this behaviour will sit upon me!—You have always rally'd me upon my meekness, I think! Well then, I'll try, if I can be still meeker, shall I!—O my dear!

But let me sit with my hands before me, all patience, all resignation; for I think I hear him coming up.—Or shall I roundly accost him, in the words, in the form, you, my dear, have prescrib'd?

He is come in.—He has sent to me, all impatience in his aspect, Dorcas says.—But I cannot, cannot see him!

Monday Night.

THE contents of your letter, and my own heavy reflections, render'd me incapable of seeing this expecting man!—The first word he asked Dorcas was, If I had

had received a letter since he had been out?—She told me this; and her answer, That I had; and was fasting, and had been in tears ever since.

He sent to desire an interview with me.

I answer'd by her, That I was not very well. In the morning, if better, I would see him as soon as he pleased.

Very humble! was it not my dear?—Yet he was too royal to take it for humility; for Dorcas told me he rubb'd one side of his face impatiently; and said a rash word, and was out of humour; stalking about the room.

Half an hour after, he sent again; desiring very earnestly, that I would admit him to supper with me. He would enter upon no subjects of conversation, but what I should lead to.

So I should have been at *liberty*, you see, to *court him*!

I again desired to be excused.

Indeed, my dear, my eyes were swelled: I was very low-spirited; and could not think of entering all at once, after several days distance, into the freedom of conversation, which my friends' utter rejection of me, as well as your opinion, have made necessary.

He sent up to tell me, that as he heard I was fasting, if I would promise to eat some chicken which Mrs. Sinclair had order'd for supper he would acquiesce.—Very kind in his anger!—Is he not?

I promised him. Can I be more *preparatively* condescending?—How happy, I'll warrant you, if I may meet him in a kind and forgiving humour!

I hate myself!—But I won't be insulted. Indeed I won't! for all this.

LETTER XII.

*Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE, To Miss Howe.**Tuesday, May 16.*

I THINK once more, we seem to be in a kind of train; but through a storm. I will give you the particulars.

I heard him in the dining-room at five in the morning. I had reited very ill, and was up too: But opened not my door till six: When Dorcas brought me his request for my company.

He approached me, and taking my hand, as I enter'd the dining-room, I went not to bed, Madam, till two, yet slept not a wink. For God's sake torment me not, as you have done for a week past.

He paus'd. I was silent.

At first, proceeded he, I thought your resentment of a mere unavailing curiosity could not be deep; and that it would go off of itself: But when I found, it was to be kept up till you knew the success of some new overtures which you had made, and which comply'd with, might have depriv'd me of you for ever; how, Madam, could I support myself under the thoughts of having, with such an union of interests, made so little impression upon your mind in my favour?

He paus'd again. I was still silent. He went on.

I acknowledge that I have a proud heart, Madam. I cannot but hope for some instances of previous and preferable favour from the lady I am ambitious to call mine; and that her choice of me should not appear, not *flagrantly* appear, directed by the perverseness of her selfish persecutors, and my irreconcileable enemies.

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More

More to the same purpose he said : You know, my dear, the room he had given me to recriminate upon him, in twenty instances : I did not spare him : But I need not repeat those instances to you. Every one of these instances, I told him, convinced me of his *pride*, indeed, but not of his *merit*. I confessed, that I had as much pride as himself ; altho' I hoped it was of another kind, than that he so readily avowed. But that if he had the least mixture in *his* of the laudable pride (a pride worthy of his birth, of his family, and of his fortune), he should rather wish, I would presume to say, to promote *mine*, than either to suppress, or to regret that I had it : That *hence* it was, that I thought it beneath me to disown what had been by motives for declining, for some days past, any conversation with him, or visit from Mr. Mennell, that might lead to points out of my power to determine upon, until I heard from my uncle Harlowe ; whom, I confessed, I had caused to be founded, whether I might be favour'd with his interest, to obtain for me a reconciliation with my friends, upon terms which I had caused to be proposed to him.

He knew not, he said, and supposed must not presume to ask, what these terms were. But he could but too well guess at them ; and that he was to have been the preliminary sacrifice. But I must allow him to say, That as much as he admired the nobleness of my sentiments in general, and in particular that *laudable* pride in me, which I had spoken of ; he wish'd, that he could compliment me upon such an uniformity in it, as should have set me as much above all submission to minds implacable and unreasonable (he hoped he might, without offence, say that my brother's and sister's were such), as it had above all favour and condescension to him.

Dt. 7

Duty and nature, Sir, call upon me to make the submissions you speak of: There is a father, there is a mother, there are uncles, in the one case, to justify and demand those submissions—What, pray, Sir, can be pleaded for the *condescension*, as you call it?—Will you say, your merits, either with regard to them, or to myself, may?

This to be said, after the persecutions of those relations! After what you have suffer'd! After what you have made me hope! Let me ask you, Madam, (we talked of *pride* just now), What sort of pride must *his* be, which could dispense with inclination and preference in his lady's part of it?—What must be that love—

Love, Sir! who talks of *love*?—Was not *merit* the thing we are talking of?—Have I ever professed; have I ever required of *you* professions of a passion of that nature? But there is no end of these *debatings*; each *so* *faultless*, each *so* *full of self*—

I do not think myself *faultless*, Madam:—But—

But what, Sir!—Would you evermore argue with me, as if you were a child?—Seeking palliations, and making promises?—Promises of what, Sir? Of being in future the man it is a shame a gentleman is not?—Of being the man—

Good God! interrupted he, with eyes lifted up, if *thou* wert to be thus severe—

Well, well, Sir, impatiently—I need only to observe, that all this vast difference in sentiments shews how unpair'd our minds are—So let us—

Let us *what*, Madam!—My soul is rising into tumults! And he look'd so wildly, that it startled me a good deal—Let us *what*, Madam—

Why, Sir, let us resolve to quit every regard for each other—[Nay, flame not out—] I am a poor weak-minded creature in some things: But where what I *should be*, or not deserve to live, if I *am not*,

is in the question, I have great and invincible spirit, or my own conceit betrays me].—Let us resolve to quit every regard for each other that is more than civil. *This* you may depend upon; you may, if it will fewel your pride, gratify it with this assurance; That I will never marry any other man. I have seen enough of your sex; at least of *you*.—A single life shall ever be *my choice*—While I will leave you at liberty to pursue *your own*.

Indifference, worse than indifference! said he, in a passion—

Interrupting him—Indifference let it be—You have not, in *my* opinion, at least, deserved it should be other: If you have in *your own*, you have cause, at least your *pride* has, to hate me for misjudging you.—

Dearest, dearest creature! snatching my hand with wildness, let me beseech you to be *uniformly* noble! *Civil regards*, Madam!—*Civil regards*!—Can you so expect to narrow and confine such a passion as mine!—

Such a passion as yours, Mr. Lovelace, *deserves* to be narrow'd and confin'd.—It is either the passion *you* do not think it; or *I* do not.—I question whether your mind is capable of being *so* narrow'd and *so* widen'd as is necessary to make it be what I wish it to be. Lift up your hands and your eyes, Sir, in that emphatical silent wonder, as you please: But what does it expres, what does it convince me of; but that we are not born for one another?

By his soul, he said, and grasp'd my hand with an eagerness that hurt it, we *were* born for one another: *I must* be his—I *should* be his (and put his other arm round me), altho' his damnation were to be the purchase!—

I was terrify'd!—Let me leave you—or begone from me, Sir—Is the passion you boast, to be thus shockingly declared!

You

You must not go, Madam!—You must *not* leave me in anger—

I will return—I will return—When you can be less violent—less shocking.

And he let me go.

The man quite frightened me; insomuch that when I got into my chamber, I found a sudden flow of tears a great relief to me.

In half an hour he sent a little billet, expressing his concern for the vehemence of his behaviour, and praying to see me.

I went—Because I could not help myself, I went.

He was full of his excuses.—O my dear, what would you, even *you*, do with such a man as this; and in my situation?

It was very possible for him now, he said, to account for the workings of a frenzical disorder. For his part, he was near distraction. All last week to suffer as he had suffer'd; and now to talk of *civil regards* only, when he had hoped from the nobleness of my mind—

Hope what you will, interrupted I; I must insist upon it, that our minds are by no means suited to each other. You have brought me into difficulties. I am deserted of every friend but Miss Howe. My true sentiments I will not conceal: It is against my will, that I must submit to owe protection from a brother's projects, which Miss Howe thinks are not given over, to you, who have brought me into these freights; *not* with my own concurrence brought me into them; remember that—

I do remember that, Madam! So often reminded, how can I forget it?

Yet I *will* owe to you this protection, if it be necessary, in the earnest hope, that you will *shun* rather than *seek* mischief, if any further inquiry after me be made. But what hinders you from leaving me?—

Cannot I send to you? The Widow Fretchville, it is plain, knows not her own mind: The people here indeed are civiller every day than other: But I had rather have lodgings more agreeable to my circumstances. I best know what will suit them; and am resolved not to be obliged to any body. If you leave me, I will take a civil leave of these people, and retire to some one of the neighbouring villages, and there, secreting myself, wait my cousin Morden's arrival with patience.

He presumed, he told me, from what I said, that my application to my relations was unsuccessful: That therefore he hoped I would give him leave now to mention the terms in the nature of settlements, which he had long intended to propose to me; and which having till now delay'd to do, thro' accidents not proceeding from himself, he had thoughts of urging to me the moment I enter'd upon my new house; and upon finding myself as independent in *appearance* as I was in *fact*. Permit me, Madam, to propose these matters to you:—Not with an expectation of your immediate answer; but for your consideration.

Were not hesitation, a self-felt glow, a downcast eye, more than enough? Your advice was too much in my head: I hesitated.

He urg'd on upon my silence: He would call God to witness to the justice, nay to the *generosity* of his intentions to me, if I would be so good as to hear what he had to propose to me, as to settlements.

Could not the man have fallen into the subject without this *parade*? Many a point, you know, is refused, and *ought to be* refused, if leave be asked to introduce it; and when once refused, the refusal must in honour be adhered to:—Whereas, had it been *slid* in upon one, as I may say, it might have merited further consideration. If such a man as he knows not this, who should?

I thought

I thought myself obliged, though not to depart from this subject intirely, yet to give it a more diffuse turn; in order, on the one hand, to save myself the mortification of appearing too ready in my compliance, after such a distance as had been between us; and on the other, to avoid (in pursuance of your advice) the necessity of giving him such a repulse, as might again throw us out of the course.

A cruel alternative to be reduced to!

You talk of *generosity*, Mr. Lovelace, said I; and you talk of *justice*; perhaps without having considered the force of the words, in the sense you use them on this occasion.—Let me tell you what *generosity* is, in my sense of the word—**TRUE GENEROSITY** is not confined to pecuniary instances: It is *more* than politeness: It is *more* than good faith: It is *more* than honour: It is *more* than *justice*: Since all these are but duties, and what a worthy mind cannot dispense with. But **TRUE GENEROSITY** is greatness of soul: It incites us to do more by a fellow-creature, than can be strictly required of us: It obliges us to hasten to the relief of an object that wants relief; anticipating even hope or expectation. *Generosity*, Sir, will not surely permit a worthy mind to doubt of its honourable and beneficent intentions: Much less will it allow itself to shock, to offend any one; and, least of all, a person thrown by adversity, mishap, or accident, into its protection.

What an opportunity had he to clear his intentions, had he been so disposed, from the *latter part* of this home observation!—But he run away with the *first*, and kept to that.

Admirably defin'd! he said.—But who at this rate, Madam, can be said to be *generous* to you?—Your *generosity* I implore; while, *justice*, as it must be my sole merit, shall be my aim. Never was there a woman of such nice and delicate sentiments!

It is a reflection upon yourself, Sir, and upon the company you have kept, if you think these notions either nice or delicate. Thousands of my sex are more nice than I; for they would have avoided the devious path I have been surprized into: The consequences of which surprize have laid me under the sad necessity of telling a man, who has not delicacy enough to enter into those parts of the female character, which are its glory and distinction, what True Generosity is.

His divine monitress, he called me!—He would endeavour to form his manners, as he had often promised, by my example. But he hoped I would now permit him to mention briefly the *justice* he proposed to do me, in the terms of the settlement; a subject so proper, before now, to have been enter'd upon; and which would have been enter'd upon long ago, had not my frequent displeasure taken from him the opportunity he had often wish'd for: But now having ventur'd to lay hold of this, nothing should divert him from improving it.

I have no spirits just now, Sir, to attend to such weighty points. What you have a mind to propose, write to me: And I shall know what answer to return. Only one thing let me remind you of, that if you touch upon any subject, in which my papa has a concern, I shall judge by your treatment of the father, what value you have for the daughter.

He *looked*, as if he would chose rather to speak than write: But had he *said* so, I had a severe return to have made upon him; as possibly he might see by *my* looks.

In this way we are now: A sort of calm, as I said, succeeding a storm:—What may happen next, whether a storm or a calm, with such a spirit as I have to deal with, who can tell?

But

But be that as it will, I think, my dear, I am not *meanly* off: And that is a great point with me; and which I know you'll be glad to hear: If it were only, that I can see this man without losing any of that dignity (what other word can I use, speaking of *myself*, that betokens *decency*, and not *arrogance*?) which is so necessary to enable me to look up, or rather, with the *mind's* eye, I may say, to look down upon a man of this man's cast.

Altho' circumstances have so offer'd, that I could not take your advice as to the *manner* of dealing with him; yet you gave me so much courage by it, as has enabled me to conduct things to this issue; as well as determin'd me against leaving him: Which *before*, I was thinking to do, at all adventures. Whether, when it came to the point, I *should* have done so, or not, I cannot say, because it would have depended upon his behaviour at the time.

But let his behaviour be what it will, I am afraid with you, that, should any thing offer, at last, to oblige me to leave him, I shall not mend my situation in the world's eye; but the contrary. And yet I will not be treated by him with indignity, while I have any power to help myself.

You, my dear, have accused me of having *modesty'd-away*, as you phrase it, several opportunities of being—Being what, my dear?—Why, the wife of a libertine: And what a libertine and his wife are, my cousin Morden's letter tells us.—Let me here, once for all, endeavour to account for the motives of my behaviour to this man, and for the principles I have proceeded upon, as they appear to me upon a close self-examination.

Be pleased then to allow me to think, that my motives on this occasion, arise not *altogether* from maid-only niceness; nor yet from the apprehension of what my present tormentor, and future husband, may think

of a precipitate compliance, on such a disagreeable behaviour as his: But they arise principally from what offers to my own heart, respecting, as I may say, its own rectitude, its own judgment of the *fit* and the *unfit*; as I would, without study, answer *for myself to myself*, in the *first* place; to *him*, and to the *world*, in the *second* only. — Principles, that *are* in my mind; that *I found* there; implanted, no doubt, by the first gracious Planter: Which therefore *impell* me, as I *may* say, to act up to them, that thereby I may, to the best of my judgment, be enabled to comport myself worthily in both states (the single and the married), let others act as they will by *me*.

I hope, my dear, I do not deceive myself, and, instead of setting about rectifying what is amiss in my heart, endeavour to find excuses for habits and peculiarities, which I am unwilling to cast off or overcome. The heart is very deceitful: Do you, my dear friend, lay mine open (but, surely, it is always open before you!) and spare me not, if you find or think it culpable.

This observation, once for all, as I said, I thought proper to make, to convince you, that, to the best of my judgment, my errors, in matters as well of the lesser moment, as the greater, shall rather be the fault of my understanding than of my will.

I am, my dearest friend,

Your ever obliged

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER

LETTER XII.

Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE, To Miss HOWE.

Tuesday Night, May 16.

MR. LOVELACE has sent me, by Dorcas, his proposals, as follow :

‘ To spare a delicacy so extreme, and to obey you, I write : And the rather, that you may communicate this paper to Miss Howe, who may consult any of her friends you shall think proper to have intrusted on this occasion. I say, *intrusted* ; because, as you know, I have given it out to several persons, that we are actually marry’d’

‘ In the first place, Madam, I offer to settle upon you, by way of jointure, your whole estate. And moreover to vest in trustees such a part of mine in Lancashire, as shall produce a clear four hundred pounds a year, to be paid to your sole and separate use, quarterly.’

‘ My own estate is a clear 2000*l.* *per annum.* Lord M. proposes to give me possession either of That which he has in Lancashire (to which, by the way, I think I have a better title than he has himself), or That we call *The Lawn* in Hertfordshire, upon my nuptials with a lady whom he so greatly admires ; and to make that I shall choose a clear 1000*l.* *per annum.*’

‘ My too great contempt of censure has subjected me to much traduction. It may not therefore be improper to assure you, on the word of a gentleman, that no part of my estate was ever mortgaged. And that altho’ I liv’d very expensively abroad, and made large draughts, yet, that Midsummer-Day next will discharge all that I owe in the world. My notions are not all bad ones. I have been thought, in

‘ in pecuniary cases, *generous*. It would have de-
‘ served *another name*, had I not first been *just*?’

‘ If, as your own estate is at present in your father’s
‘ hands, you rather choose that I should make a
‘ jointure out of mine, tantamount to yours, be it
‘ what it will, it shall be done. I will engage Lord
‘ M. to write to *you* what he proposes to do on the
‘ happy occasion : Not as your desire or expectation,
‘ but to demonstrate, that no advantage is intended
‘ to be taken of the situation you are in with your
‘ own family.’

‘ To shew the beloved daughter the consideration
‘ I have for her, I will consent, that she shall pre-
‘ scribe the terms of agreement in relation to the
‘ large sums, which must be in her father’s hands,
‘ arising from her grandfather’s estate. I have no
‘ doubt but he will be put upon making large demands
‘ upon you. All those it shall be in your power to
‘ comply with, for the sake of your own peace.
‘ And the remainder shall be paid into your hands,
‘ and be entirely at your disposal, as a fund to sup-
‘ port those charitable donations, which I have heard
‘ you so famed for *out* of your family ; and for which
‘ you have been so greatly reflected upon *in* it.’

‘ As to cloaths, jewels, and the like, against the
‘ time you shall choose to make your appearance, it
‘ will be my pride, that you shall not be beholden for
‘ such of these, as shall be answerable to the rank of
‘ both, to those who have had the stupid folly to re-
‘ nounce a daughter they deserved not. You must
‘ excuse me, Madam : You would mistrust my fin-
‘ cerity in the rest, could I speak of these people with
‘ less asperity, tho’ so nearly related to you.’

‘ These, Madam, are my proposals. They are
‘ such as I always designed to make, whenever you
‘ would permit me to enter into the delightful sub-
‘ ject. But you have been so determin’d to try every
‘ method

method for reconciling yourself to your relations, even by giving me absolutely up for ever, that you have seem'd to think it but justice to keep me at a distance, till the event of that your *predominant* hope could be seen. It is *now* seen!—And altho' I *have been*, and perhaps still *am*, ready to regret the want of that preferance I wish'd for from you as Miss Clarissa Harlowe; yet I am sure, as the husband of Mrs. Lovelace, I shall be more ready to adore than to blame you for the pangs you have given to a heart, the generosity, or rather *justice* of which, my im-placable enemies have taught you to doubt: And this still the readier, as I am persuaded, that those pangs never would have been given by a mind so noble, had not the doubt been entertained, perhaps with too great an appearance of reason; and as I hope I shall have it to reflect, that the moment the doubt shall be overcome, the indifference will cease.

I will only add, that if I have omitted any thing, that would have given you further satisfaction; or if the above terms be short of what you would wish; you will be pleased to supply them as you think fit. And when I know your pleasure, I will instantly order articles to be drawn up conformably; that nothing in my power may be wanting to make you happy.

You will now, dearest Madam, judge how far all the rest depends upon yourself.

You see, my dear, what he offers. You see it is all my fault, that he has not made these offers before.—I am a strange creature! To be to blame in everything, and to every-body! Yet neither intend the ill at the time, nor know it to *be* the ill till too late, or so nearly too late, that I must give up all the delicacy he talks of, to compound for my fault!

I shall

I shall now judge how far all the rest depends upon myself! So coldly concludes he such warm, and, in the main, unobjectionable proposals! Would you nor, as you read, have supposed, that the paper would conclude with the most earnest demand of a day! — I own, I had that expectation so strong, resulting *naturally*, as I may say, from the premises, that without studying for dissatisfaction, I could not help being dissatisfied, when I came to the conclusion.—But you say, there is no help. I must, perhaps, make *further* sacrifices. All delicacy, it seems, is to be at an end with me! But if so, this man knows not what every *wife* man knows, that prudence, and virtue, and delicacy of mind in a *wife*, do the husband more *real* honour, in the eye of the world, than the same qualities (were *she* destitute of them) in *himself*: As the want of them in her does him more *dis*-honour: For are not the wife's errors, the husband's reproach? How *justly* his reproach, is another thing.

I will consider this paper; and write to it, if I am able: For it seems now, *all the rest depends upon myself*.

LETTER XIV.

Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE, To Miss HOWE.

Wednesday Morning, May 17.

MMR. Lovelace would fain have engaged me last night. But as I was not prepar'd to enter upon the subject of his proposals, intending to consider them maturely, and was not highly pleased with his conclusion (and then there is hardly any getting from him in tolerable time over-night), I desired to be excused seeing him till morning.

About seven o'clock we met in the dining-room. I find, he was full of expectation that I should meet him with a very favourable, who knows, but with a *thankful*

thankful aspect?—And I immediately found by his full countenance, that he was under no small disappointment that I did not.

My dearest love, are you well?—Why look you so solemn upon me?—Will your indifference never be over?—If I have proposed terms in any respect short of your expectation—

I told him, that he had very considerately mention'd my shewing his proposals to Miss Howe, and consulting any of her friends upon them by her means; and I should have an opportunity to send them to her, by Collins, by-and-by; and so insisted to suspend any talk upon that subject till I had her opinion upon them.

Good God!—If there were but the least loop-hole; the least room for delay!—But he was writing a letter to his uncle, to give him an account of his situation with me, and could not finish it so satisfactorily, either to my Lord, or to himself, as if I would descend to say, whether the terms he had proposed were acceptable, or not.

Thus far, I told him, I could say, That my principal point was peace and reconciliation with my family. As to other matters, the gentleness of his own spirit would put him upon doing more for me than I should ask, or expect. Wherefore, if all he had to write about was to know what Lord M. would do on my account, he might spare himself the trouble; for that my utmost wishes as to myself, were much more easily gratify'd than he perhaps imagin'd.

He asked me then, If I would so far permit him to touch upon the happy day, as to request his uncle's presence on the occasion, and to be my father?

Father had a sweet and venerable sound with it, I said. I should be glad to have a father who would own me.

Was

Was not this plain speaking, think you, my dear? Yet it rather, I must own, appears so to me on reflection, than was *designed* freely at the time. For I then, with a sigh from the bottom of my heart, thought of my *own father*; bitterly regretting, that I am an outcast from him and from my mother.

Mr. Lovelace, I thought, seemed a little affected; at the *manner* of my speaking, as well as at the sad reflection, I suppose.

I am but a very young creature, Mr. Lovelace, said I, and wiped my averted eye, altho' you have *kindly*, and in *love to me*, introduced so much sorrow to me already: So you must not wonder, that the word *father* strikes so sensibly upon the heart of a child, ever dutiful till she knew you, and whose tender years still require the paternal wing.

He turned towards the window: [Rejoice with me, my dear, since I seem devoted to him, that the man is not absolutely impenetrable!]-His emotion was visible; yet he endeavoured to suppress it—Approaching me again; again he was obliged to turn from me; Angelic something, he said: But then, obtaining a heart more *suitable* to his wish, he once more approached me.—For his own part, he said, as Lord M. was so subject to the gout, he was afraid, that the compliment he had just proposed to make him, might, if made, occasion a longer suspension, than he could bear to think of. And if it did, it would vex him to the heart, that he had made it.

I could not say a single word to this, you know, my dear. But you will guess at my thoughts of what he said—So much passionate love, *lip-deep*! So prudent, and so dutifully patient *at heart* to a relation he had, till now, so undutifully despised!—Why, why, am I thrown upon such a man! thought I.—

He hesitated, as if contending with himself, and after taking a turn or two about the room,—He was

at a great loss what to determine upon, he said, because he had not the honour of knowing when he was to be made the happiest of men:—Would to God it might that very instant be resolved upon!

He stopp'd a moment or two, staring in my down-cast face [Did I not, O my beloved friend, think you, want a father or a mother just then?] But if he could not, so soon as he wished, procure my consent to a day; in that case, he thought the compliment might as well be made to Lord M. as not:—Since the settlements might be drawn and ingrossed in the intervening time, which would pacify his impatience, as no time would be lost.

You will suppose how I was affected by this speech, by repeating the substance of what he said upon it; as follows.

—But by his foul, he knew not, so much was I upon the reserve, and so much latent meaning did my eye import, whether, when he most hoped to please me, he was not farthest from doing so. Would I vouchsafe to say, Whether I approved of his compliment to Lord M. or not?

Miss Howe, thought I, at that moment, says, I must not run away from this man!

To be sure, Mr. Lovelace, if this matter is ever to be, it must be agreeable to me to have the full approbation of one side, since I cannot have that of the other.

If this matter be ever to be! Good God! what words were these at this time of day! And full approbation of one side! Why that word approbation? When the greatest pride of all his family was, That of having the honour of so dear a creature for their relation? Would to Heaven, my dearest life, added he, that, without complimenting Any-body, to-morrow might be the happiest day of my life!—What say you,

you, my angel? With a trembling impatience, that seemed not affected,—What say you for *to-morrow*?

It was likely, my dear, I could say much to it, or name another day, had I been disposed to the latter, with such an hinted delay from him.

Next day, Madam, if not to-morrow!—Or the day after that!—And taking my two hands, stared me into a half-confusion.

No, no; You cannot think all of a sudden, there should be reason for such a hurry. It will be most agreeable, to be sure, for my Lord to be present.

I am all obedience and resignation, returned the wretch, with a self-pluming air, as if he had acquiesced to a proposal made by me, and had complimented me with a great piece of self-denial.

Modesty, I think, required it of me, that it should pass so: Did it not?—I think it did. Would to Heaven—But what signifies wishing?

But when he would have *rewarded himself*, as he had heretofore called it, for this self-supposed concession, with a kiss, I repulsed him with a just and very sincere disdain.

He seem'd both vex'd and surpriz'd, as one who had made proposals that he had expected every thing from. He plainly said, that he thought our situation would intitle him to such an innocent freedom: And he was both amaz'd and griev'd to be thus scornfully repulsed.

No reply could be made by me. I abruptly broke from him. I recollect, as I passed by one of the pier-glasses, that I saw in it his clenched hand offered in wrath to his forehead: The words, *indifference, by his soul, next to hatred*, I heard him speak: And something of *ice* he mentioned: I heard not what.

Whether he intends to write to my Lord, or to Miss Montague, I cannot tell. But as all delicacy ought to be over with me *now*, perhaps I am to blame

to expect it from a man who may not know *what it is*. If he does *not*, and yet thinks himself very delicate, and intends not to be otherwif^e, I am rather to be pitied, than he to be censured. And after all, since I *must* take him as I find him, I *must*: That is to say, as a man so vain, and so accustom'd to be admired, that, not being conscious of internal defect, he has taken no pains to polish more than his outside: And as his proposals are higher than my expectations; and as in his own opinion, he has a great deal to bear from *me*, I *will* (no new offence preventing) fit down to answer them:—And, if pos-
sible, in terms as unobjectionable to him, as his are to me.

But after all, see you not, my dear, more and more, the mismatch that there is in our minds?

However, I am willing to compound for my fault, by giving up, (if that may be all my punishment) the expectation of what is deemed happiness in this life, with such a husband as I fear he will make. In short, I will content myself to be a suffering person thro' the state to the end of my life. A long one it can-
not be!

This may qualify him (as it may prove) from stings of conscience from misbehaviour to a *first* wife, to be a more tolerable one to a *second*, tho' not perhaps bet-
ter deserving: While my story, to all who shall know it, will afford these instructions: That the eye is a traitor, and ought ever to be mistrusted: That form is deceitful: In other words; That a fine person is seldom pair'd by a fine mind: And that sound prin-
ciples, and a good heart, are the only basis on which the hopes of a *happy future*, either with respect to the *here* or to the *hereafter*, can be built.

And so much at present for Mr. Lovelace's propos-
als: Of which I desire your opinion.

I am, my dearest friend,

Your ever-obliged

CL. HARLOWE.

Four

Four letters are written by Mr. Lovelace from the date of his last, giving the state of affairs between him and the lady, pretty much the same as in hers in the same period, allowing for the humour in his; and for his resentments expressed with vehemence on her resolution to leave him, if her friends could be prevailed upon.—A few extracts from them will be only given.

‘ What, says he, might have become of me, and my projects, had not her father, and the rest of the implacables, stood my friends?’ After violent threatenings and vows of revenge, he says—‘ Tis plain she would have given me up for ever; nor should I have been able to prevent her abandoning of me, unless I had torn up the tree by the roots to come at the fruit; which I hope still to bring down by a gentle shake or two, If I can but have patience to stay the ripening season.’

Thus triumphing in his unpolite cruelty, he says,—‘ After her haughty treatment of me, I am resolved she shall speak out. There are a thousand beauties to be discovered in the face, in the accent, in the bush-beating hesitations of a woman that is earnest about a subject which she wants to introduce, yet knows not how. Silly rogues, calling themselves generous ones, would value themselves for sparing a lady’s confusion: But they are silly rogues indeed; and rob themselves of prodigious pleasure by their forwardness; and at the same time deprive her of displaying a world of charms, which only can be manifested on these occasions. Heard-heartedness as it is called, is an essential of the libertine’s character. Familiarized to the distresses he occasions, he is seldom betray’d by tenderness into a compliant weakness unworthy of himself. How have I enjoyed a charmer creature’s confusion, as I have sat over-against her; her eyes lost in admiration of

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‘ my shoebuckles, or meditating some uncouth figure in the carpet !’

Mentioning the settlements, he says,—‘ I am in earnest as to the terms. If I marry her (and I have no doubt but that I shall, after my pride, my ambition, my *revenge*, if thou wilt, is gratify’d), I will do her noble justice. The more I do for such a prudent, such an excellent œconomist, the more shall I do for myself.—But, by my soul, Belford, her haughtiness shall be brought down to own both love and obligation to me.—Nor will this sketch of settlements bring us forwarder than I would have it. Modesty of sex will stand my friend at any time. At the very altar, our hands join’d, I’d engage to make this proud beauty leave the parson and me, and all my friends present, tho’ there were twenty of them, to look like fools upon one another, while she took wing, and flew out of the church-door, or window, if that were open, and the door shut ; and this only by a very word.’

He mentions his rash expression, that she should be his, altho’ damnation were to be the purchase ; and owns that, at that instant, he was upon the point of making a violent attempt ; but that he was check’d in the very moment, and but just in time, by the awe he was struck with on again casting his eye upon her terrify’d-but lovely face, and seeing, as he thought, her spotless heart in every line of it.

‘ O virtue, virtue ! says he, what is there in thee, that can thus affect the heart of such a man as me, against my will !—Whence these involuntary tremors, and fear of giving mortal offence ?—What art thou, that acting in the breast of a feeble woman, canst strike so much awe into a spirit so intrepid ! Which never before, no, not in my first attempt, young as I then was, and frightened at my

‘ own

‘ own boldness (till I found myself *forgiven*), had such
‘ an effect upon me !’

He paints, in lively colours, that part of the scene between him and the Lady, where she says, ‘ The word *father* has a sweet and venerable sound with it.’

‘ I was exceedingly affected, says he, upon the occasion. But was ashamed to be surprised by her into such a fit of unmanly weakness :—So ashamed, that I was resolved to subdue it at the instant, and guard against the like for the future. Yet, at that moment, I more than half regretted, that I could not permit her to enjoy a triumph which she so well deserved to glory in :—Her youth, her beauty, her artless innocence, and her manner, equally beyond comparison or description. But her *indifference*, Belford !—That she could resolve to sacrifice me to the malice of my enemies ; and carry on the design in so clandestine a manner—Yet love her, as I do, to frenzy !—Revere her, as I do, to adoration !—These were the recollections with which I fortify’d my recreant heart against her.—Yet, after all, if she persevere, she must conquer—Coward, as she has made me, that never was a coward before !’

HE concludes his fourth letter in a vehement rage, upon her repulsing him when he offer’d to salute her ; having supposed, as he owns, that she would have been all condescension on his proposals to her.

‘ This, *says he*, I will for ever remember against her, in order to steel my own heart, that I may cut thro’ a rock of ice to hers ; and repay her for the disdain, the scorn, which glow’d in her countenance, and was apparent in her air, at her abrupt departure from me, after such obliging behaviour on my side, and after I had so earnestly pressed her for an early day.—The women below say, She hates me, she despises me !—And ’tis true : She does ;

does ; she must.—And why cannot I take their advice ?—I will not long, my fair one, be despised by thee, and laughed at by them !

‘ Let me acquaint thee, Jack, adds he, by way of ‘ postscript, That this effort of hers to leave me, ‘ if she could have been received ; her sending ‘ for a coach on Sunday ; no doubt, resolving ‘ not to return, if she had gone out without me ‘ (for did she not declare, that she had thoughts ‘ to retire to some of the villages about town, ‘ where she could be safe and private ?) ; have ‘ all together so much alarm’d me, that I have ‘ been adding to the written instructions for my ‘ servant, and the people below, how to act, in ‘ case she should elope in my absence : Particu- ‘ larly letting my fellow know what he shall re- ‘ port to strangers, in case she shall throw her- ‘ self upon any such, with a resolution to aban- ‘ don me. These instructions I shall further ‘ add to, as circumstances offer.’

LETTER XV.

Miss Howe, To Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Thursday, May 18.

I HAVE neither time nor patience, my dear friend, to answer to every material article in your last letters, just now received. Mr. Lovelace’s proposals are all I like of him. And yet (as you do) I think, that he concludes them not with that warmth and earnestness which we might naturally have expected from him. Never in my life did I hear or read of so patient a man, with such a blessing in his reach. But wretches of his cast, between you and me, my dear, have not, I fancy, the ardors that honest men have. Who knows, as your Bell once spitefully said, but he

may

may have half a dozen creatures to quit his hands of, before he engages for life?—Yet I believe you must not expect him to be honest on this side of his grand climacteric.

He, to suggest delay from a compliment to be made to Lord M. and to give time for settlements!—He, a part of whose character it is, not to know what complaisance to his relations is!—I have no patience with him!—You did indeed want an interposing friend, on the affecting occasion which you mention in yours of yesterday morning. But, upon my word, were I to have been that moment in your situation, and been so treated, I would have torn his eyes out, and left it to his own heart, when I had done, to furnish the reason for it.

Would to Heaven to-morrow, without complimenting any-body, might be his happy day!—Villain! After he had himself suggested the compliment!—And I think he accuses You of delaying!—Fellow, that he is!—How my heart is wrung—

But as matters now stand betwixt you, I am very unseasonable in expressing my resentments against him.—Yet I don't know whether I am or not, neither; since it is the cruellest of fates, for a woman to be forced to have a man whom her heart despises. You must, at least, despise him; at times, however. His clenched fist offered to his forehead on your leaving him in just displeasure; I wish it had been a poleax, and in the hand of his worst enemy.

I will endeavour to think of some method, of some scheme, to get you from him; and to fix you safely somewhere, till your cousin Morden arrives: A scheme to lie by you, and to be pursued as occasion may be given. You are sure, that you can go abroad when you please; and that our correspondence is safe. I cannot however, for the reasons heretofore mentioned, respecting your own reputation, wish you to

leave

leave him, while he gives you not cause to suspect his honour.—But your heart, I know, would be the easier, if you were sure of some asylum, in case of necessity.

Yet once more, I say, I can have no notion that he can or dare to mean you dishonour.—But then the man is a fool, my dear—that's all.

However, since you are thrown upon a fool, marry the fool, at the first opportunity; and tho' I doubt that this man will be the most ungovernable of fools, as all witty and vain fools are, take him as a punishment, since you cannot as a reward. In short, as one given, to convince you, that there is nothing but imperfection in this life.

I shall be impatient till I have your next. I am, my dearest friend,

Your ever affectionate and faithful

ANNA HOWE.

LETTER XVI.

MR. BELFORD, TO ROBERT LOVELACE, Esq;

Wednesday, May 17.

I WOULD conceal nothing from you that relates to yourself so much as the inclosed. You will see what the noble writer apprehends from you, and wishes of you, with regard to Miss Harlowe, and how much at heart all your relations have it, that you do honourably by her. They compliment me with an influence over you, which I wish with all my soul you would let me have in this article.

Let me once more intreat thee, Lovelace, to reflect before it be too late, before the mortal offence be given, upon the graces and merits of this lady. Let thy frequent remorses at last end in one effectual

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one.

one. Let not pride and wantonness of heart, ruin thy fairer prospects. By my faith, Lovelace, there is nothing but vanity, conceit, and nonsense, in our wild schemes. As we grow older, we shall be wiser, and looking back upon our foolish notions of the present hour, shall certainly despise ourselves (our youth dissipated), when we think of the honourable engagements we might have made. Thou, more especially, if thou lettest such a matchless creature slide thro' thy fingers. A creature pure from her cradle. In all her actions and sentiments uniformly noble. Strict in the performance of all her even *unrewarded* duties to the most unreasonable of fathers, what a wife will she make the man who shall have the honour to call her his!

Reflect likewise upon her sufferings for thee. Actually at the time thou art forming schemes to ruin her (at least, in *her* sense of the word) is she not labouring under a father's curse laid upon her by thy means, and for thy sake? And wouldst thou give operation and completion to this curse?

And what, Lovelace, all the time is thy pride? Thou that vainly imaginest, that the whole family of the Harlowes, and that of the Howes too, are but thy machines, unknown to themselves, to bring about thy purposes, and thy revenge: What art thou more, or better, than the instrument even of her implacable brother, and envious sister, to perpetuate the disgrace of the most excellent of sisters, which they are moved to by vilely low and sordid motives?—Canst thou bear, Lovelace, to be thought the machine of thy inveterate enemy James Harlowe?—Nay, art thou not the cully of that still viler Joseph Leman, who serves himself as much by thy money, as he does thee by the double part he acts by thy direction?—And the devil's agent besides, who only can, and who certainly

tainly will, suitably reward thee, if thou proceedest, and if thou effectest thy wicked purpose?

Could any man but you put together upon paper the following questions, with so much unconcern as you seem to have written them?—Give them a reperusal, O heart of adamant! ‘Whither can she fly to avoid me? Her parents will not receive her; her uncles will not entertain her; Her beloved Norton is in their direction, and cannot. Miss Howe dare not. She has not one friend in town but ME: Is entirely a stranger to the town.’—What must that heart be that can triumph in a distress so deep, into which she has been plunged by thy elaborate arts and contrivances? And what a sweet, yet sad reflection was that, which had almost had its due effect upon thee, arising from thy naming Lord M. for her nuptial father! Her tender years inclining her to *wish* a father, and to *hope* a friend.—O my dear Lovelace, canst thou resolve to be, instead of the father thou hast robbed her of, a devil?

Thou knowest, that I have no interest, that I can have no view, in wishing thee to do justice to this admirable creature. For thy own sake, once more I conjure thee, for thy family's sake, and for the sake of our common humanity, let me beseech thee to be just to Miss Clarissa Harlowe.

No matter whether these expostulations are in character from me, or not. I *have* been, and *am*, bad enough. If thou takest my advice, which is, as the inclosed will shew thee, the advice of all thy family, thou wilt perhaps have it to reproach me (and but perhaps neither), that thou art not a worse man than myself. But if thou dost *not*, and if thou ruinest such a virtue, all the complicated wickedness of ten devils, let loose among the innocent, with full power over them, will not do so much vile and base mischief as thou will be guilty of.

It is said, that the prince on his throne is not safe, if a mind so desperate can be found, as values not its own life. So may it be said, that the most immaculate virtue is not safe, if a man can be met with, who has no regard to his own honour, and makes a jest of the most solemn vows and protestations.

'Thou mayest by trick, chicane, and false colours, thou who art worse than a pickeroon in love, overcome a poor lady so intangled as thou hast intangled her; so unprotected as thou hast made her: But consider, how much more generous and just to her, and noble to thyself, it is, to overcome *thyself*.

Once more, it is no matter, whether my past or future actions countenance my preaching, as perhaps thou'l call what I have written: But this I promise thee, that whenever I meet with a woman of but one half of Miss Harlowe's perfections, who will favour me with her acceptance, I will take the advice I give, and marry. Nor will I attempt to try her honour at the hazard of my own. In other words, I will not degrade an excellent creature in her own eyes, by trials, when I have no caufe for suspicion. And let me add, with respect to thy *Eagleship's* manifestation, of which thou boastest, in thy attempts upon the innocent and uncorrupted, rather than upon those whom thou humorously compareſt to wrens, philtits, and wagtails, that I hope I have it not once to reproach myself, that I ruin'd the morals of any one creature, who otherwise would have been uncorrupted. Guilt enough in contributing to the *continued* guilt of other poor wretches, if I am one of those who take care she shall never rise again, when she has once fallen.

Whatever the capital devil, under whose banner thou hast listed, will let thee do, with regard to this incomparable woman, I hope thou wilt act with honour in relation to the inclosed, between Lord M. and

and me; who, as thou wilt see, desires that thou mayest not know he wrote on the subject; for reasons, I think, very far from being creditable to thyself: And that thou wilt take as meant the honest zeal for thy service, of

Thy real Friend,

J. BELFORD.

LETTER XVII.

Lord M. To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

[Inclosed in the preceding]

SIR, M. Hall, Monday May 15.

IF any man in the world has power over my nephew, it is you. I therefore write this, to beg you to interfere in the affair depending between him and the most accomplished of women, as every one says; and *what every one says must be true.*

I don't know that he has any bad designs upon her, but I know his temper too well, not to be apprehensive upon such long delays: And the ladies here have been for some time in fear for her; my sister Sadleir, in particular, who (you know) is a wise woman, says, that these delays, in the present case, must be from him, rather than from the lady. He had always indeed a strong antipathy to marriage; and may think of playing his dog's tricks by her, as he has by so many others. If there's any danger of this, 'tis best to prevent it in time: For, *when a thing is done, advice comes too late.*

He has always had the folly and impertinence to make a jest of me for using proverbs: But as they are the wisdom of whole nations and ages, collected into a small compass, I am not to be shamed out of sentences, that often contain more wisdom in them,

than the tedious harangues of most of our parsons and moralists. Let him laugh at them if he pleases: You and I know better things, Mr. Belford.—*Tho' you have kept company with a wolf, you have not learnt to howl of him.*

But nevertheless, you must not let him know, that I have written to you on this subject. I am ashamed to say it; but he has ever treated me, as if I were a man of very common understanding. And would perhaps think never the better of the best advice in the world, for coming from me.

I am sure, he has no reason to slight me, as he does. He may and will be the better for me, if he outlives me; tho' he once told me to my face, That I might do as I would with my estate; for that he, for his part, loved his liberty as much as he despised money. He thought, I suppose, that *I could not cover him with my wings, without pecking at him with my bill*; tho' I never used to be pecking at him, without very great occasion: And, God knows, he might have my very heart, if he would but endeavour to oblige me, by studying his own good; for that is all I desire of him. Indeed, it was his poor mother that first spoil'd him; and I have been but too indulgent to him since.—A fine grateful disposition, you'll say, to *return evil for good!* But that was always his way.

This match, however, as the lady has such an extraordinary share of wisdom and goodness, might set all to rights: and if you can forward it, I would enable him to make whatever settlements he could wish; and should not be unwilling to put him in possession of another pretty estate besides: For what do I live for (as I have often said), but to see him and my two nieces well married and settled? May heaven settle him down to a better mind, and turn his heart to more of goodness and consideration!

If

If the delays are on his side I tremble for the lady ; and, if on hers (as he tells my niece Charlotte), I could wish the young lady were apprized, that *Delays are dangerous.* Excellent as she is, I can tell her, she ought not to depend on her merits with such a changeable fellow, and such a professed marriage hater, as he has been. I know you are very good at giving kind hints. *A word to the wise is enough.*

I wish you would try what you can do with him ; for I have warned him so often of his wicked practices, that I begin to despair of my words having any effect upon him. But let him remember, that *Vengeance, tho' it comes with leaden feet, strikes with iron hands.* If he behaves ill in this case, he may find it so. What a pity it is, that a man of his talents and learning should be so vile a rake ! Alas ! alas ! *Une poignée de bonne vie vaut mieux que plein tuy de clergé ;* A handful of good life is better than a whole bushel of learning.

You may throw in, too, as his friend, that, should he provoke me, it may not be too late for me to marry. My old friend Wycherly did so, when he was older than I am, on purpose to plague his nephew : And, in spite of this gout, I might have a child or two still. And have not been without some thoughts that way, when he has angered me more than ordinary : But these thoughts have gone off again hitherto, upon my considering, that *the children of very young and very old men* [tho' I am not so very old neither] *last not long ;* and that *old men when they marry young women, are said to make much of death :* Yet who knows but that matrimony might be good against the gouty humours I am troubled with ?

The sentences, that I have purposely wove into my discourse, may be of some service to you in talking to him ; but use them sparingly, that he may not discover, that you borrow your *darts* from my *quiver.*

May your good counsels, Mr. Belford, founded upon the hints I have given, pierce his heart and incite him to do what will be so happy for himself, and so necessary for the honour of that admirable lady whom I long to see his wife; and, if I may, I will not think of one for myself.

Should he abuse the confidence she has plac'd in him, I myself shall pray, that vengeance may fall upon his head.—*Raro—Raro*—(I quite forget all my Latin! but I think it is)—*Raro antecedentem scelestum deseruit pede pœna claudo*: Where vice goes before vengeance (sooner or later) will follow.

I shall make no apologies to you for this trouble. I know how well you love him and me; and there is nothing in which you could serve us both more importantly, than in forwarding this match to the utmost of your power. When it is done, how shall I rejoice to see you at M. Hall! Mean time, I shall long to hear, that you are likely to be successful; and am,

Dear Sir,

Your most faithful friend and servant,

M.

Mr. Lovelace having not returned an answer to Mr. Belford's expostulatory letter, so soon as Mr. Belford expected, he wrote to him, expressing his apprehension, that he had disengaged him by his honest freedom. Among other things, he says—‘ I pass my time here at Watford, attending my dying uncle, very heavily. I cannot therefore, by any means, dispense with thy correspondence. And why should thou punish me, for having more conscience and remorse than thyself? Thou, who never thoughtest either conscience or remorse an ho-

hour to thee. And I have besides, a melancholy story to tell thee, in relation to Belton and his Thomasine; and which may afford a lesson to all the keeping class.'

' I have a letter from each of our three companions in the time. They have all the wickedness that thou hast, but not the wit. Some new rogueries do two of them boast of, which, I think, if completed, deserve the gallows.'

' I am far from hating intrigue upon principle. But to have awkward fellows plot, and commit their plots to paper, destitute of the seasonings, of the *acumen*, which is thy talent, how extremely shocking must their letters be! — But do thou, Lovelace, whether thou art, or art not, determined upon thy measures, with regard to the fine lady in thy power, enliven my heavy heart by thy communications; and thou wilt oblige.

Thy melancholy friend,

J. BELFORD.

LETTER XVIII.

Mr LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Friday Night, May 19.

WHEN I have opened my views to thee so amply, as I have done in my former letters; and have told thee, that my principal design is but to bring virtue to a trial, that, if virtue, it need not be afraid of; and that the reward of it will be marriage (that is to say, if, after I have carried my point, I cannot prevail upon her to live with me the Life of Honour; for that thou knowest is the wish of my heart).

heart); I am amazed at the repetition of thy wambling nonsense.

I am of opinion with thee, that some time hence, when I am *grown wiser*, I shall conclude, that *there is nothing but vanity, conceit, and nonsense, in my present wild schemes*. But what is this saying, but that I must be *first wiser*?

I do not intend to let this matchless creature slide through my fingers.

Art thou able to say half the things in her praise, that I have said, and am continually saying or writing?

Her gloomy father cursed the sweet creature, because she put it out of his wicked power to compel her to have the man she hated. Thou knowest how little merit she has with me on this score.—And shall I not try the virtue I intend, upon full proof, to reward, because her father is a tyrant?—Why art thou thus eternally reflecting upon so excellent a woman, as if thou wert assured she would fail in the trial?—Nay, thou declarest, every time thou writest on the subject, that she *will*, that she *must* yield, *intangled as she is*: And yet makest her virtue the pretence of thy solicitude for her.

An instrument of the vile James Harlowe, dost thou call me?—O Jack! how I could curse thee!—I an instrument of that brother! of that sister!—But mark the end—And thou shalt see what will become of that brother, and of that sister!

Play not against me my own acknowledged sensibilities, I desire thee. Sensibilities which, at the same time that they contradict thy charge of an *adamantine heart* in thy friend, thou hadst known nothing of, had I not communicated them to thee.

If I ruin such virtue, sayest thou?—Eternal monotonist!—Again; *The most immaculate virtue may be ruined by men, who have no regard to their honour*, and

who

who make a jest of the most solemn oaths, &c. What must be the virtue that will be ruined without oaths? Is not the world full of these deceptions? And are not *lovers oaths* a jest of hundreds of years standing? And are not cautions against the perfidy of our sex, a necessary part of the female education?

I do intend to endeavour to overcome *myself*; but I must first try, if I cannot overcome *this lady*. Have I not said, that the honour of her Sex is concerned that I should *try*?

Whenever thou meetest with a woman of but half her perfections, thou wilt marry.—Do Jack.

Can a girl be degraded by trials, who is not overcome?

I am glad, that thou takest crime to thyself, for not endeavouring to convert the poor wretches whom *others* have ruined. I will not recriminate upon thee, Belford, as I might, when thou flatterest thyself, that thou never ruinedst the morals of any young creature, who otherwise would not have been corrupted.—The palliating consolation of an Hottentot heart, determined rather to gluttonize on the garbage of other foul feeders, than to reform.—But tell me, Jack, wouldest thou have spared such a girl as my Rosebud, had I not, by my example, engaged thy generosity? Nor was my Rosebud the only girl I spared:—When my power was acknowledged, who more merciful than thy friend?

*It is resistance that inflames desire,
Sharpens the darts of love, and blows its fire.
Love is disarm'd that meets with too much ease;
He languishes, and does not care to please.*

The women know this as well as the men. They love to be addressed with spirit;

And

*And therefore 'tis their golden fruit they guard
With so much care, to make possession hard.*

Whence, for a by-reflection, the ardent, the complaisant Gallant is so often preferr'd to the cold Husband. And yet the Sex do not consider, that Variety or Novelty gives the ardour and the obsequiousness; and that, were the Rake as much used to them as the Husband is, he would be (and is to his own wife, if married) as indifferent to their favours; and the Husband, in his turn, would to another woman, be the Rake. Let the women, upon the whole, take this lesson from a Lovelace—Always to endeavour to make themselves as New to a Husband, and to appear as elegant and as obliging to him, as they are desirous to appear to a Lover, and actually were to him as *such*; and then the Rake, which all women love, will last longer in the Husband, than it generally does.

But to return:—If I have not sufficiently clear'd my conduct to thee in the above; I refer thee once more to mine of the 13th of last month. And pr'ythee Jack, lay me not under a necessity to repeat the same things so often. I hope thou readest what I write more than once.

I am not displeased that thou art so apprehensive of my resentment, that I cannot miss a day, without making thee uneasy. Thy conscience, 'tis plain, tells thee, that thou hast deserved my displeasure: And if it has convinced thee of *that*, it will make thee afraid of repeating thy fault. See that this be the consequence. Else, now that thou hast told me how I can punish thee, it is very likely that I do punish thee by my silence, altho' I have as much pleasure in writing on this charming subject, as thou canst have in reading what I write.

When a boy, if a dog ran away from me thro' fear, I generally looked about for a stone, a stick, or a brickbat;

a brickbat ; and if neither offer'd to my hand, I skimm'd my hat after him, to make him afraid for something. What signifies power, if we do not exert it ?

Let my Lord know thou hast scribbled to me. But give him not the contents of thy epistle. Tho' a parcel of crude stuff, he would think there was something in it. Poor arguments will do in favour of what we like. But the stupid Peer little thinks, that this lady is a rebel to love. On the contrary, not only he, but all the world, believe her to be a volunteer in his service.—So I shall incur blame, and she will be pity'd, if any thing happen amiss.

Since my Lord's heart is so set upon this match, I have written already to let him know, ' That my unhappy character has given my beloved an ungenerous diffidence of me. That she is so mother-sick and father-fond, that she had rather return to Harlowe-place, than marry. That she is even apprehensive, that the step she has taken of going off with me, will make the ladies of a family of such name and rank as ours, think slightly of her. That therefore I desire his Lordship (tho' this hint, I tell him, must be very delicately touched) to write me such a letter as I can shew her. Let him treat me in it ever so freely, I shall not take it amiss, because I know his Lordship takes pleasure in writing to me in a corrective style. That he may make what offers he pleases on the marriage. That I desire his presence at the ceremony ; that I may take from his hand the greatest blessing that mortal man can give me.'

I have not absolutely told the lady that I would write to his Lordship to this effect ; yet have given her reason to think I will. So that without the last necessity I shall not produce the answer I expect from him : For I am very loth, I own, to make use of any

of my family's names for the furthering of my designs.
And yet I must make all secure, before I pull off the
mask. This was my motive for bringing her hither.

Thus, thou seest, that the old Peer's letter came
very seasonably. I thank thee for it. But as to his
sentences, they cannot possibly do me good. I was
early suffocated with his *Wisdom of nations*. When
a boy, I never asked any thing of him, but out flew
a *proverb*; and if the tendency of that was to deny
me, I never could obtain the least favour. This gave
me so great an aversion to the very word, that, when
a child, I made it a condition with my tutor, who
was an honest parson, that I would not read my Bible
at all, if he would not excuse me one of the wisest
books in it: To which, however, I had no other ob-
jection, than that it was called *The Proverbs*. And
as for Solomon, he was then a hated character with
me, not because of his polygamy, but because I had
conceived him to be such another musty old fellow as
my uncle.

Well, but let us leave old saws to old men.—
What signifies thy tedious whining over thy departing
relation? Is it not generally agreed, that he cannot
recover? Will it not be kind in thee, to put him out
of his misery? I hear, that he is pester'd still with
visits from doctors, and apothecaries, and surgeons;
that they cannot cut so deep as the mortification has
gone; and that in every visit, in every scarification,
inevitable death is pronounced upon him. Why then
do they keep tormenting him? Is it not to take away
more of his living fleece than of his dead flesh?—
When a man is given over, the fee should surely be
refused. Are they not now robbing his heirs?—What
hast thou to do, if the will be as thou'dst have it?—
He sent for thee [Did he not?] to close his eyes. He
is but an *uncle*, is he?

Let me see, if I mistake not, it is in the Bible, or
some

some other good book: Can it be in Herodotus?—O, I believe it is in Josephus; A half-sacred and half-profan author. He tells us of a king of Syria, put out of his pain by his prime minister, or one who deserved to be so for his contrivance. The story says, if I am right, that he spread a wet cloth over his face, which killing him, he reigned in his place. A notable fellow! Perhaps this wet cloth, in the original, is what we now call *laudanum*; a potion that over-spreads the faculties, as the wet cloth did the face of the royal patient, and the translator knew not how to render it.

But how like a forlorn varlet thou subscribest, *Thy melancholy friend*, J. BELFORD!—Melancholy! for what? To stand by, and see fair play between an old man and death? I thought thou hadst been more of a man; thou that art not afraid of an acute death, a fword's point, to be so plaguily hyp'd at the consequences of a chronicle one?—What tho' the scarificators work upon him day by day? it is only upon a *caput mortuum*: And pr'ythee *Go to*, to use the *stylum veterum*, and learn of the *Royal butchers*; who, for sport [an hundred times worse men than thy Lovelace] widow ten thousand at a brush, and make twice as many fatherless; and are dubb'd *Magnus* or *Le Grand* for it: Learn of them, I say, how to support a single death.

I wish my uncle had given me the opportunity of setting thee a better example: Thou shouldst have seen what a brave fellow I had been. And had I had occasion to write, my conclusion would have been this: 'I hope the old Trojan's happy. In that hope, 'I am so; and

• *Thy rejoicing friend,*

R. LOVELACE.

Dwell

Dwell not always, Jack, upon one subject. Let me have poor Belton's story; the sooner the better. If I can be of service to him, tell him he may command me, either in purse or person. Yet the former with a freer will than the latter; for how can I leave my goddess? But I'll issue my commands to my other vassals to attend thy summons. If ye want *head*, let me know. If not, my quota on this occasion is *money*.

LETTER XIX.

Mr. BELFORD, To ROBERT LOVELACE, Esq;

Saturday, May 20.

NOT one word will I reply to such an abandon'd wretch, as thou hast shewn thyself to be in thine of last night. I will leave the lady to the protection of that Power who only can work miracles; and to her own merits. Still I have hopes that these will save her.

I will proceed, as thou desirest, to poor Belton's case; and the rather, as it has thrown me into such a train of thinking upon our past lives, our present courses, and our future views, as may be of service to both, if I can give due weight to the reflections that arise from it.

The poor man made me a visit on Thursday, in this my melancholy attendance. He began with complaints of his ill health and spirits, his hectic cough, and his increased malady of spitting of blood; and then led to his story.

A confounded one it is; and which highly aggravates his other maladies: For it has come out, that his Thomasine (who truly would be new-christen'd, you know, that her name might be nearer in sound to the christian name of the man whom she pretended

to

to doat upon) has for many years carried on a intrigue with a fellow who had been hostler to her father, (an innkeeper at Dorking) ; of whom, at the expence of poor Tom, she has made a gentleman ; and managed it so, that having the art to make herself his cashier, she has been unable to account for large sums, which poor Belton thought forthcoming at his demand, and had trusted to her custody, in order to pay off a mortgage upon his paternal estate in Kent, which his heart had run upon leaving clear ; but which cannot now be done, and will soon be foreclosed. And yet she has so long passed for his wife, that he knows not what to resolve upon about her ; nor about the two boys he was so fond of, supposing them to be his ; whereas now he begins to dout his share in them.

So KEEPING don't do, Lovelace. 'Tis not the eligible life. ' A man may *keep a woman*, said the ' poor fellow to me, but *not his estate!* — Two ' interests ! — Then, my tottering fabric ! ' pointing to his emaciated carcase.

We do well to value ourselves upon our *liberty*, or, to speak more properly, upon the liberties we take ! We had need to run down matrimony as we do, and to make that state the subject of our frothy jests ; when we frequently render ourselves [for this of Tom's is not a *singular case*] the dupes and fools of women, who generally govern us (by arts our wife heads penetrate not) more absolutely than a wife would attempt to do.

Let us consider this point a little ; and that upon our own *principles* as *libertines*, setting aside what the *laws of our country*, and its *customs*, oblige from us ; which, nevertheless, we cannot get over, till we have got over almost all moral obligations, as members of society.

In the first place, let us consider [we, who are in possession of estates by *legal descent*], how we should have

have liked to have been such naked destitute varlets, as we must have been, had our fathers been as wise as ourselves ; and despised matrimony as we do.— And then let us ask ourselves, if we ought not to have the same regard for our posterity, as we are glad our fathers had for *theirs* ?

But this, perhaps, is too *moral* a consideration.— To proceed therefore to those which will be more striking to *us*, How can we reasonably expect economy or frugality (or any thing indeed but riot and waste) from creatures who have an *interest*, and must therefore have *views*, different from our own ?

They know the uncertain tenure [our fickle humours] by which they hold : And is it to be wonder'd at, supposing them to be provident harlots, that they should endeavour, if they have the *power*, to *lay up against a rainy day* ; or, if they have *not* the power, that they should squander all they can come at, when they are sure of *nothing but the present hour* ; and when the life they live, and the sacrifices they have made, put conscience and honour out of the question ?

Whereas a *wife* having the same family-interest with her husband, lies not under either the same *apprehensions* or *temptations* ; and has not broken thro' [of necessity, at least, has not] *those* restraints which education has fasten'd upon her : And if she make a private purse, which we are told by anti-matrimonialists, all wives love to do, and has children, it goes all into the same family, at the long-run.

Then, as to the great article of fidelity to your bed, are not women of family, who are well-educated, under greater restraints, than creatures, who, if they ever *had* reputation, sacrifice it to sordid interest, or to more sordid appetite, the moment they give up to you ; Does not the example you furnish, of having succeeded with her, give encouragement for others to attempt her likewise ? For, with all her blandishments,

blandishments, can any man be so credulous, or so vain, as to believe, that the woman *he* could persuade, *another* may not prevail upon?

Adultery is so capital a guilt, that even rakes and libertines, if not wholly abandon'd, and, as I may say, *invited* by a woman's levity, disavow and condemn it: But here, in a state of **KEEPING**, a woman is in no danger of incurring, *legally*, at least, that guilt; and you yourself have broken thro', and overthrown in her, all the fences and boundaries of moral honesty, and the modesty and reserves of her Sex: And what tie shall hold her against inclination, or interest? And what shall deter an attempter?

While a husband has this security from *legal* sanctions, that if his wife be detected in a criminal conversation with a man of fortune [the *most* likely by bribes to seduce her], he may recover very great damages, and procure a divorce besides: Which, to say nothing of the ignominy, is a consideration that must have some force upon *both* parties. And a wife must be vicious indeed, and a reflection upon a man's own choice, who, for the sake of change, and where there are no qualities to seduce, nor affluence to corrupt, will run so many hazards to injure her husband in the tenderest of all points.

But there are difficulties in procuring a divorce—[And so there ought:—]—And none, says the rake, in parting with a mistress, whenever you suspect her; or, whenever, weary of her, you have a mind to change her for another.

But must not the man be a brute indeed, who can cast off a woman whom he has seduced [If he take her from the town, that's another thing], without some flagrant reason; something that will better justify him to *himself*, as well as to *her* and to the *world*, than mere *power* and *novelty*?

But

But I don't see, if we judge by *fact*, and by the *practice* of all we have been acquainted with, of the *Keeping class*, that we may know how to part with them when we have them.

That we know we *can* if we *will*, is all we have for it : And this leads us to bear many things from a *mistress*, which we would not from a *wife*. But if we are good-natur'd and humane : If the woman has *art* [And what woman *wants* it, who has fallen by *art*? and to whose precarious situation *art* is so necessary?] If you have given her the credit of being called by your name : If you have a settled place of abode, and have received and paid visits in her company, as your wife : If she has brought you children ; you will allow that these are strong obligations upon you, in the world's eye, as well as to your own heart, against tearing yourself from such close connexions. She will stick to you as your skin : And it will be next to flaying yourself to cast her off.

Even if there be *cause* for it, by infidelity, she will have managed ill, if she have not her defenders — Nor did I ever know a cause, or a person, so *bad*, as to want advocates, either from ill will to the one, or pity to the other ; and you will then be thought a heard-hearted miscreant : And even were she to go off without credit to *herself*, she will leave *you* as little ; especially with all those whose good opinion a man would wish to cultivate.

Well, then, shall this poor privilege, that we may part with a woman, if we *will*, be deem'd a balance for the other inconveniences ? Shall it be thought by *us*, who are men of family and fortune, an equivalent for giving up equality of degree ; and taking for the partner of our bed, and very probably more than the partner in our estates (to the breach of all family-rule and order) a low-born,

a low-

a low-educated creature, who has not brought any-thing into the common stock; and can pos-sibly make no returns for the solid benefits she receives, but those libidinous ones, which a man cannot boast of, but to his disgrace, nor think of but to the shame of *both*?

Moreover, as the man advances in years, the fury of his libertinism will go off. He will have different aims and pursuits, which will diminish his appetite to ranging, and make such a regular life as the ma-trimonal and family-life, palatable to him, and every day more palatable.

If he has children, and has reason to think them his, and if his lewd courses have left him any estate, he will have cause to regret the *restraint* his boasted *liberty* has laid him under, and the valuable *privilege* it has deprived him of; when he finds, that it must descend to some relation, for whom, whether near or distant, he cares not one farthing; and who, per-haps, from his dissolute life, if a man of virtue, has held him in the utmost contempt.

And were we to suppose his estate in his power to bequeath as he pleases; why should a man resolve, for the gratifying of his wicked humour only, to ba-stardize his race? Why should he wish to expose them to the scorn and insults of the rest of the world?—Why should he, whether they are men or women, lay them under the necessity of complying with pro-positals of marriage, either inferior as to fortune, or unequal as to age?—Why should he deprive the children he loves, and who are themselves guilty of no fault (if they have regard to morals and to legal and social sanctions) of the respect they would wish to have, and to deserve?—and of the opportunity of associating themselves with proper, that is to say, with *reputable* company?—And why should he make them think themselves under obligation to every per-
son

son of character, who should vouchsafe to visit them? What little reason, in a word, would such children have to bless their father's obstinate defiance of the laws and customs of his country; and for giving them a mother, whom they could not think of with honour; to whose *crime* it was, that they owed their very beings, and whose example it was their duty to shun?

If the education and morals of these children are left to chance, as too generally they are (for the man who has humanity and a feeling heart, and who is capable of fondness for his offspring, I take it for granted, will marry); the case is still worse; his crime is perpetuated, as I may say, by his children: And the Sea, the Army, perhaps the Highway, for the boys; the Common for the girls; too often point out the way to a worse catastrophe.

What therefore, upon the whole, do we get by treading in these crooked paths, but danger, disgrace, and a too late repentance?

And after all, do we not frequently become the culies of our own libertinism; sliding into the very state with those half-worn-out doxies; which perhaps we might have enter'd into with their ladies; at least with their superiors, both in degree and fortune? And all the time, lived handsomely like ourselves; not sneaking into holes and corners; and, when we crept abroad with our women, looking about us at every opening into the street or day, as if we were confessedly accountable to the censures of all honest people.

My cousin Tony Jenyns, thou knowest. He had not the actively mischievous spirit, that Thou, Belton, Mowbray, Myself and Tourville, have: But he imbibed the same notions we do, and carried them into practice.

How

How did he prate against wedlock ! How did he strut about as a *wit* and a *smart* ! And what a *wit* and a *smart* did all the boys and girls of our family, myself among the rest, then an urchin, think him, for the airs he gave himself ?—Marry ! No, not for the world : what man of sense would bear the insolences, the petulances, the expensiveness of a wife ! He could not for the heart of him think it tolerable, that a woman of *equal* rank and fortune, and, as it might happen *superior* talents to his own, should look upon herself to have a right to share the benefit of that fortune which she brought him.

So, after he had flutter'd about the town for two or three years, in all which time he had a better opinion of himself than any-body else had, what does he do, but enter upon an affair with his fencing-master's daughter ?

He succeeds, takes private lodgings for her at Hackney ; visits her by stealth, both of them tender of reputations, that were *extremely* tender, but which neither had quite given over ; for rakes of either sex are always the last to condemn or cry down themselves : Visited by no-body, nor visiting : The life of a thief, or of a man beset by creditors, afraid to look out of his own house, or to be seen abroad with her. And thus went he on for twelve years, and, tho' he had a good estate, hardly making both ends meet ; for, tho' no glare, there was no œconomy ; and besides, he had every year a child, and very fond of them was he. But none of them lived above three years : And being now, on the death of the dozenth, grown as dully sober, as if he had been a real husband, his good Mrs. Thomas (for he had not permitted her to take his own name) prevailed upon him, to think the los of their children a judgment upon the parents for their wicked way of life [There is a time, when calamities will beget reflection ! The royal cully of France,

France, thou knowest, was *Maintenon'd* into it by his ill successes in the field]: And so, when more than half-worn out *both* of them, the sorry fellow took it into his head to marry her: And then had leisure to sit down, and contemplate the many offers of persons of family and fortune, which he had declined in the prime of his life: His expences *equal* at least: His reputation not only *less* but *lost*: His enjoyments *stolen*: His partnership *unequal*, and such as he had always been ashamed of. But the women said, That after twelve years cohabitation, Tony did an honest thing by her. And that was all my poor cousin got by making his old mistress his new wife.—Not a drum, not a trumpet, not a fife, not a tabret, nor the expectation of a new joy, to animate him on!

What Belton will do with his Thomasine, I know not; nor care I to advise him: For I see the poor fellow does not like that any-body should curse her but himself: And that he does very heartily. And so low is he reduced, that he blubbers over the reflection upon his past fondness for her cubs, and upon his present doubts of their being his: ‘What a d—n'd thing is it, Belford, if Tom and Hall should be the hostler dog's puppies, and not mine!’ Very true! and I think the strong health of the chubby-faced, muscular whelps, confirms the too great probability. But I say not so to him.

You, he says, are such a gay, lively mortal, that this sad tale would make no impression upon you: Especially now, that your whole heart is engaged as it is. Mowbray would be too violent upon it; he has not, he says, a feeling heart: Tourville has no discretion: And, a pretty jest! although he and his Thomasine lived without reputation in the world (People guessing that they were not married, notwithstanding she went by his name); yet, ‘he would not too much discredit the cursed ingrate neither!—

Could

Could a man act a weaker part, had he been really married ; and were he sure he was going to separate from the mother of his own children ?

I leave this as a lesson upon thy heart, without making any application : Only with this remark, That after we libertines have indulged our licentious appetites, reflecting in the conceit of our vain hearts, both with our lips and by our lives, upon our ancestors, and the good old ways, we find out, when we come to years of discretion, if we live till then [what all who know us found out before, that is to say; we find out] our own despicable folly ; that those good old ways would have been best for us, as well as for the rest of the world ; and that in every step we have deviated from them, we have only exposed our vanity and our ignorance at the same time.

J. BELFORD.

I. E T T E R XX.

MR. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq.

Saturday, May 20.

I Am pleased with the sober reflection thou concludest thy last with ; and I thank thee for it. Poor Belton !—I did not think his Thomasine would have proved so very a devil. But this must everlastingly be the risque of a keeper, who takes up with a low-bred girl. This I never did. Nor had I occasion to do. Such a one as I, Jack, needed only, till now, to shake the stateliest tree, and the mellow'd fruit dropt into my mouth : Always of Montaigne's taste, thou knowest :—Thought it a glory to subduc a girl of family—More truly delightful to me the seduction-progres than the crowning act : For that's a vapour, a bubble !—And most cordially do I thank thee

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for

for thy indirect hint, that I am right in my present pursuit.

From such a lady as Miss Harlowe, a man is secured from all the inconveniencies thou expatiatest upon.

Once more, therefore, do I thank thee, Belford, for thy approbation!—One need not as thou sayest, sneak into holes and corners, and shun the day, in the company of such a lady as this. How friendly in thee, thus to abet the favourite purpose of my heart!—Nor can it be a disgrace to me, to permit such a lady to be called by my name!—Nor shall I be at all concerned about the world's censure, if I live to the *years of discretion*, which thou mentionest, should I be taken in, and be prevailed upon to tread with her the good old path of my ancestors.

A blessing on thy heart, thou honest fellow! I thought thou wert but in jest, or acting but by my uncle's desire, when thou wert pleading for matrimony in behalf of this lady!—It could not be principle, I knew, in thee: It could not be compassion—A little envy indeed I suspected!—But now I see thee once more thyself: And once more say I, A blessing on thy heart, thou true friend, and very honest fellow!

Now will I proceed with courage in all my schemes, and oblige thee with the continued narrative of my progressions towards bringing them to effect!—But I could not forbear to interrupt my story, to shew my gratitude!

LETTER XXI.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Saturday, May 20.

AND now will I favour thee with a brief account of our present situation.

From the highest to the lowest we are all extremely happy

happy.—*Dorcias* stands well in her lady's graces. *Polly* has asked her advice in relation to a courtship affair of her own. No oracle ever gave better. *Sally* has had a quarrel with her woollen-draper; and made my beloved Lady-chancellor in it. She blamed *Sally* for behaving tyrannically to a man who loves her. Dear creature! to stand against a glass, and to shut her eyes because she will not see her face in it! —Mrs. Sinclair has paid *her* court to so unerring a judge, by requesting her advice with regard to both nieces.

This the way we have been in for several days with the people below. Yet *sola* generally at her meals, and seldom at other times in their company. They now, used to her ways [Perseverance must conquer], never press her; so when they meet, all is civility on both sides. Even marry'd people, I believe, Jack, prevent abundance of quarrels, by seeing one another but seldom.

But how stands it between thyself and the lady, methinks thou alkest, since her abrupt departure from thee, and undutiful repulse of Wednesday morning? Why, pretty well in the main. Nay, very well. For why? The dear saucy-face knows not how to help herself. Can fly to no other protection. And has, besides, overheard a conversation [Who could have thought she had been so near?] which passed between Mrs. Sinclair, Miss Martin, and myself, that very Wednesday afternoon; which has set her heart at ease, with respect to several doubtful points.

Such as, particularly, Mrs. Fretchville's unhappy state of mind: Most humanely pitied by Miss Martin, who knows her very well; the husband she has lost, and herself, lovers from their cradles. Pity from one begets pity from another; and so many circumstances were given to poor Mrs. Fretchville's distress, that it was impossible but my beloved must *extremely* pity ; her,

her, whom the less tender-hearted Miss Martin *greatly* pitied.

My Lord M.'s gout his only hindrance from visiting my spouse.

Lady Betty and Miss Montague soon expected in town.

My earnest desire signifi'd to have my spouse receive them in her own house, if Mrs. Fretchville would but know her own mind.

My intention to stay at their house notwithstanding, *as I said I had told them before*, in order to gratify her utmost punctilio.

My passion for my beloved, which I told them, in a high and fervent accent, was the truest that man could have for a woman, I boasted of. It was, in short, I said, of the *true Platonic kind*; or I had no notion of what Platonic love was.

So it is, Jack: and must end as Platonic Love generally does end.

Sally and Mrs. Sinclair praised, *but not grossly*, my beloved. Sally particularly admired her purity, called it exemplary; yet to avoid suspicion, expressed her thoughts, that she was *rather over-nice*, if she might presume to say so before me. But applauded me for the strict observation I made of my vow.

I more freely blamed her reserves to me; called her cruel; inveighed against her relations; doubted her love. Every favour I asked of her deny'd me. Yet my behaviour to her as pure and delicate when alone, as when before me. Hinted at something that had passed between us that very day, that shew'd her indifference to me in so strong a light, that I could not bear it. But that I would ask her for her company to the Play of *Venice preserv'd*, given out for Saturday night, as a benefit play; the prime actors to be in it; and this to see, if I were to be denied every favour.

— Yet, for my own part, I loved not tragedies; tho' the

she did, for the sake of the instruction, the warning, and the example generally given in them.

I had too much *feeling*, I said. There was enough in the world to make our hearts sad, without carrying grief into our diversions, and making the distresses of others our own.

True enough, Belford; and I believe, generally speaking, that all the men of our cast are of my mind. They love not any tragedies but those in which they themselves act the parts of tyrants and executioners; and, afraid to trust themselves with serious and solemn reflections, run to comedies, to laugh away the distresses they have occasioned, and to find examples of as immoral men as themselves. For very few of our comic performances, as thou knowest, give us good ones—I answer, however, for myself—Yet thou, I think, on recollection, lovest to deal in the *lamentable*.

Sally answered for Polly, who was absent, Mrs. Sinclair for herself, and for all her acquaintance, even for Miss Partington, in preferring the comic to the tragic scenes,--And I believe they are right; for the devil's in it, if a confided-in rake does not give a girl enough of tragedy in his comedy.

I ask'd Sally to oblige my fair-one with her company.

She was engaged [That was right, thou'l't suppose]. I asked Mrs. Sinclair's leave for Polly. To be sure, she answered, Polly would think it an honour to attend Mrs. Lovelace: But the poor thing was tender-hearted; and as the tragedy was deep, would weep herself blind.

Sally, mean time, objected Singleton, that I might answer the objection, and save my beloved the trouble of making it, or debating the point with me.

I then, from a letter just before received from one

in her father's family, warned them of a person who had undertaken to find us out, and whom I thus in writing (calling for pen and ink) described, that they might arm all the family against him—‘ A sun-burnt, ‘ pock-fretten sailor, ill-looking, big-boned ; his sta- ‘ ture about six feet ; an heavy eye, an over-hanging ‘ brow, a deck-treading stride in his walk ; a ‘ couteau generally by his side ; lips parched from his ‘ gums, as if by staring at the sun in hot climates ; ‘ a brown coat ; a coloured handkerchief about his ‘ neck ; an oaken plant in his hand, near as long as ‘ himself, and proportionably thick.’

No questions must be answer'd that he should ask. They should call me to him. But not let my beloved know a title of this, so long as it could be help'd. And I added, that if her brother or Singleton came, and if they behaved civilly, I would, for her sake, be civil to *them* : And in this case, she had nothing to do, but to own her marriage, and there could be no pretence for violence on either side. But most fervently I swore, that if she was convey'd away either by persuasion or force, I would directly, on missing her but one day, go to demand her at her father's, whether she were there or not ; and if I recover'd not a sister, I would have a brother ; and should find out a captain of ship as well as he. And now, Jack, dost thou think she'll attempt to get from me, do what I will ?

Mrs. Sinclair began to be afraid of mischief in her house—I was apprehensive that she would overdo the matter, and be out of character. I therefore wink'd at her. She primm'd ; nodded, to shew she took me, twang'd out a high-ho, lapp'd one horse-lip over the other, and was silent.

Here's preparation, Belford !—Dost think I will throw it all away, for any thing thou can'st say, or

Lord

Lord M. write?—*No indeed!*—as my charmer says, when the bridles.

And what must necessarily be the consequence of all this, with regard to my belov'd's behaviour to me?—Canst thou doubt, that it was all complaisance next time she admitted me into her presence?

Thursday we were very happy. All the morning *extremely* happy. I kissed her charming hand—I need not describe to thee her hand and arm. When thou sawest her, I took notice that thy eyes dwelt upon them, whenever thou couldst spare them from that beauty-spot of wonders, her face. *Fifty* times kissed her hand, I believe.—Once her cheek, intending her lip, but so rapturously, that she could not help seeming angry.

Had she not thus kept me at arms-length; had she not denied me those innocent liberties which our Sex, from degree to degree, aspire to; could I but have gained access to her in her hours of heedlessness and dishabille (for dull dress creates dignity, augments consciousness, and compels distance), we had been familiarized to each other long ago. But keep her up ever so late; meet her ever so early; by breakfast-time dressed for the day; and at her earliest hour, as nice as others dressed.—All her forms thus kept up, wonder not that I have made so little progress in the proposed trial.—But how must all this distance stimulate!

Thursday morning, I said, we were extremely happy—About noon, she numbered the hours she had been with me; all of them to me but as one minute; and desired to be left to herself. I was loth to comply: But observing the sun-shine begin to shut in I yielded.

I dined

I dined out. Returned; talked of the house, and of Mrs. Fretchville: Had seen Mennel—Had pressed him to get the widow to quit—She pitied Mrs. Fretchville—Another good effect of the overheard conversation—Had written to my uncle; expected an answer soon from him. I was admitted to sup with her. Urged for her approbation or correction of my written terms. She promised an answer as soon as she had heard from Miss Howe.

Then I pressed for her company to the play on Saturday night. She made objections, as I had foreseen: her brother's projects, warmth of the weather, &c. But in such a manner, as if half-afraid to disoblige me [Another happy effect of the overheard conversation]. Got over these therefore; and she consented to favour me.

Friday passed as the day before.

Here were two happy days to both!—Why cannot I make every day equally happy? It looks as if it were in my power to do so.—Strange I should thus delight in teasing a woman I so dearly love!—I must, I doubt, have something in my temper like Miss Howe, who loves to plague the man who puts himself in her power.—But I could not do thus by such an angel as this, did I not believe, that after her probation-time is expired, and if there is no bringing her to *cohabitation* (my darling view,) I shall reward her as she wishes.

Saturday is half over, equally happy—Preparing for the play—Polly has offered, and is accepted. I have directed her where to weep—and this not only to shew her humanity [a weeping eye indicates a gentle heart,] but to have a pretence to hide her face with her fan or hankerchief; yet polly is far from being every man's girl—And we shall sit in the gallery green-box.

The

The woes of others so well represented, as those of Belvidera particularly will be, must, I hope, unlock and open my charmer's heart. Whenever I have been able to prevail upon a girl to permit me to attend her to a play, I have thought myself sure of her. The female heart, all gentleness and harmony, when obliged, expands, and forgets its forms, when attention is carried out of itself at an agreeable or affecting entertainment : Music, and perhaps a collation afterwards, co-operating. I have no hope of such an effect here ; but I have more than one end to answer, by my earnestness in getting her to a play. To name but one : Dorcas has a master-key, as I have told thee —And it were worth carrying her to *Venice preserv'd*, were it but to shew her, that there have been, and may be, much deeper distresses than she can possibly know.

Thus exceedingly happy are we at present. I hope we shall not find any of Nat. Lee's left-handed gods at work, to dash our bowl of joy with wormwood.

The lady, in her next letter, dated Friday, May 19, acquaints her friend, that her prospects are once more mended ; and that she has known four-and-twenty hours together, since her last, not unhappy ones, her situation considered. ‘ How willing am I *says she*, to compound for tolerable appearances ! how desirous to turn the funny side of things towards me, and to hope, where reason for hope offers ! and this, not only for my own sake, but for yours, who take such generous concern in all that befalls me.’

She then gives the particulars of the conversation which she had overheard between Mr. Lovelace, Mrs. Sinclair, and Miss Martin ; but accounts more minutely than he had done for the opportunity she had of overhearing it, unknown to them.

She gives the reason she has to be pleased with what she heard from each: But is shocked at the measure he is resolved to take, if he misses her, but for one day. Yet is pleased, that he proposes to avoid aggressive violence, if her brother and he meet in town.

She thought herself obliged, she says, from what passed between them on Wednesday, and from what she overheard him say, to consent to go with him to the play; especially, as he had the discretion to propose one of the nieces to accompany her.

She expresses herself pleased, that he has actually written to Lord M.

She tells her, that she has promised to give him an answer to his proposals, as soon as she has heard from her on the subject: And hopes, that in her future letter she shall have reason to confirm these favourable appearances. ‘ Favourable says she, I must ‘ think them in the wreck I have suffer’d.’

She thinks it not amiss, however, that she should perfect her scheme with Mrs. Townsend. He is certainly, she says, a deep and dangerous man; and it is therefore but prudence to be watchful and to provide against the worst.

She is certain, she tells her, that her letters are safe.

He would never be out of her company by his good-will; otherwise she has no doubt that she is mistress of her goings-out and comings-in; and did she think it needful, and were she not afraid of her brother, and Captain Singleton, would oftner put it to trial.

L E T T E R

LETTER XXII.

*Miss Howe, To Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE.**Saturday, May 20.*

I Did not know, my dear, that you deferred giving an answer to Mr. Lovelace's proposals, till you had my opinion of them. A particular hand occasionally going to town, will leave this at Wilson's, that no delay may be made on that account.

I never had any doubt of the man's justice and generosity in matters of settlement; and all his relations are as noble in their spirits, as in their descent: But *now*, it may not be amiss for you to wait, to see what returns my Lord makes to his letter of invitation.

The scheme I think of is this.

There is a person (I believe you have seen her with me,) one Mrs. Townsend, who is a great dealer in Indian silks, Brussels and French laces, cambricks, linen, and other valuable goods; which she has a way of coming at, duty-free; and has a great vend for them, and for other curiosities which the imports, in the private families of the gentry round us.

She has her days of being in town, and then is at a chamber she rents in an inn in Southwark, where she has patterns of all her silks, and much of her portable goods, for the conveniency of her London customers. But her place of residence, and where she has her principal warehouse, is at Deptford, for the opportunity of getting her goods on shore.

She was first brought to me by my mother, to whom she was recommended, on the supposal of my speedy marriage; that I might have an opportunity to be as fine as a princess, was my mamma's expression at a moderate expence.

Now,

Now, my dear, I must own, that I do not love to encourage these contraband traders. What is it, but bidding defiance to the laws of our country, when we do ; and hurting fair traders ; and at the same time robbing our Prince of his legal due, to the diminution of those duties which possibly must be made good by new levies upon the whole public ?

But, however, Mrs. Townsend, and I, though we have not yet dealt, are upon a very good foot of understanding. She is a sensible woman ; she has been abroad, and often goes abroad, in the way of her business ; and gives very entertaining accounts of all she has seen. And having applied to me, to recommend her to you (as it is her view to be known to young ladies, who are likely to change their condition), I am sure I can engage her to give you protection at her house at Deptford ; which she says is a populous village ; and one of the last, I should think that you would be sought for in. She is not much there, you will believe, by the course of her dealings ; but, no doubt, must have somebody on the spot, in whom she can confide : And there perhaps you might be safe till your cousin comes. And I should not think it amiss, that you write to him out of hand. I cannot suggest to you what you should write. That must be left to your own discretion. For you will be afraid, no doubt, of the consequence of a variance between the two men.

I will think further of this scheme of mine, in relation to Mrs. Townsend, if you find it necessary that I should. But I hope there will be no occasion to do so, since your prospects seem to be changed, and that you have had *twenty-four not unhappy hours together*. How my indignation rises at this poor consolation in the courtship (*courtship* must I call it ?) of such a lady ! Mrs. Townsend, as I have recollect~~ed~~, has two brothers, each a master of a vessel ; and who knows,

as

as she and they have greater concerns together, but that, in case of need, you may have a whole ship's crew at your devotion ? If he gives you cause to leave him, take no thought for the people at Harlowe-place. Let them take care of one another. It is a care they are *used* to. The law will help to secure them. The wretch is no assassin, no night-murderer. He is an *open*, because a *fearless* enemy ; and should he attempt any thing that should make him obnoxious to the laws of society, you might have a fair ridance of him either by flight or the gallows ; *no* matter which.

Had you not been so minute in your account of the circumstance that attended the opportunity you had of overhearing the dialogue between Mr. Lovelace and two of the women, I should have thought the conference contrived on purpose for your ears.

I shew'd Mr. Lovelace's proposals to Mr. Hickman, who had chambers once at Lincoln's-Inn, being designed for the Law, had his elder brother lived. He looked so wise, so proud, and so important, upon the occasion ; and wanted to take so much consideration about them—would take them home if I pleased—and weigh them well—and so-forth—and the like—and all that---that I had no patience with him, and snatched them back with anger.

O dear !---to be so angry, and please me, for his zeal—

Yes, zeal without knowledge, I said—like most other zeals—If there were no objections that struck him at once, there were none.

So *hasty* dear Madam !—

And so *slow*, un-dearest, Sir I could have said—But, *SURELY*, said I, with a look which imply'd, *Would you rebel, Sir !*

He begged my pardon—*Saw* no objection, indeed !
--- But might he be allowed once more---

No matter—No matter—I would have shewn them to my mother, I said, who, tho' of no Inn of court, knew more of these things than half the lounging lubbers of them; and that at first sight—only that she would have been provoking upon the confession of our continued correspondence.

But, my dear, let the articles be drawn up, and ingrossed; and solemnize upon them; and there's no more to be said.

Let me add, that the sailor fellow has been tampering with my Kitty, and offered a bribe, to find where to direct to you. Next time he comes, I will have him drawn through one of our deepest fish-ponds, if I can get nothing out of him. His attempt to corrupt a servant of mine, will justify my orders.

I send this away directly. But will follow it by another; which shall have for its subject only my Mother, Myself, and your uncle Anthony. And as your prospects are more promising than they have been, I will endeavour to make you smile upon this occasion. For you will be pleased to know, that my mamma has had a formal tender from that grey goose; which may make her skill useful to herself, were she to encourage it.

May your prospects be still more and more happy,
prays

Your own ANNA HOWE.

LETTER XXIII.

Miss Howe, To Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Sat. Sunday, May 20, 21.

NOW, my dear, for the promised subject. You must not ask me, how I came by the *originals* (such they really are) that I am going to present you with: For my mamma would not read to me those parts of

of your uncle's letter, which bore hard upon myself, and which leave him without any title to mercy from me: Nor would she let me hear but what she pleased of her's in answer; for she has condescended to answer him; with a denial, however:—But such a denial, as no-one but an *old bachelor* would take from a widow.

Any-body, except myself, who could have been acquainted with such a fal-lal courtship as this must have been had it proceeded, would have been glad it had gone on; and I dare say, but for the saucy daughter, it had. My mamma, in that case, would have been ten years the younger for it, perhaps: And could I but have approved of it, I should have been considered, as if ten years older than I am: Since, very likely, it would then have been: ‘We widows, my dear, know not how to keep men at a distance—So as to give them pain, in order to try their love.—You must advise me, child: You must teach me to be cruel—Yet not *too* cruel neither.—So as to make a man heartless, who has no time, God wot, to throw away.’ Then would my behaviour to Mr. Hickman have been better liked; and my mother would have bridled like her daughter!

O my dear, how we might have been diverted, by the practisings for recovery of the *Long-forgottens*! could I have been sure that it would have been in my power to have put them asunder, in the Irish style, before they had come together. But there's no trusting to a widow whose goods and chattles are in her own hands, addressed by an old bachelor, who has fine things, and offers to leave her ten thousand pounds better than he found her, and sole mistress besides, of all her *Notables*! for these, as you'll see by-and-by, are his proposals.

The old Triton's address carries the writer's marks upon the very superscription—*To the equally amiable, and*

and worthily admired [There's for you] *Mrs. ANNA-BELLA HOWE, widow*; the last word added, I suppose, as *Esquire* to a man; or for fear the *bella* to *Anna*, should not enough distinguish the person meant from the spinster [Vain hussey you'll call me, I know]: And then follows ----*These humbly present*: ----Put down as a memorandum, I presume, to make a leg, and behave handsomely at presenting it; he intending very probably to deliver it himself.

And now stand by ----To see.

Enter OLD NEPTUNE.

His head adorned with sea-weed, and a crown of cockle shells, as we see him decked out in *Mrs. Robinson's* ridiculous grotto.

Madam,

Monday, May 15.

I DID make a sort of resolution ten years ago, never to marry. I saw in other families, where they lived best, you'll be pleased to mark that, *queernesses* I could not away with. Then, liked well enough to live single for sake of my brother's family; and for one child in it, more than the rest. But that girl has turned us all off of the hinges: And why I should deny myself any comforts for them as will not thank me for so doing, I don't know.

So much for my motives, as from self and family: But the dear *Mrs. Howe* makes me go further.

I have a very great fortune, I bless god for it, all of my own getting, or *most* of it; you'll be pleased to mark that; for I was the younger brother of three, you have also, God be thanked, a great estate, which you have improved by your own frugality and wise management. Frugality, let me stop to say, is one of the greatest virtues in this mortal life, because it enables us to do justice to *all*, and puts it in our power to benefit *some* by it, as we see they deserve.

Yor

You have but one child ; and I am a batchelor, and have never a one.---All batchelors cannot say so: Wherefore your daughter may be the better for me if she will keep up with my humour ; which was never thought bad : Especially to my equals. Servants indeed, I don't matter being angry with, when I please: They are paid for bearing it, and too-too often deserve it ; as we have very frequently taken notice of to one another. But this won't hurt neither you nor Mis:.

I will make very advantageous settlements ; such as any common friend shall judge to be so. But must have all in my own power, while I live : Because, you know, Madam, it is as creditable to the wife, as the husband, that it should be so.

I aim not at fine words. We are not children ; tho' it is hoped we may have some; for I am a very healthy sound man, I bless God for it : And never brought home from my voyages and travels, a worser constitution than I took out with me. I was none of those, I will assure you. But this I will undertake, that if you are the survivress, you shall be at *the least* ten thousand pounds the better for me : What, in the contrary case, I shall be the better for you, I leave to you, as you shall think my kindness to you shall deserve.

But one thing, Madam, I should be glad of, that Mis: Howe might not live with us then (She need not know I write thus)—But go home to Mr. Hickman, as she is upon the point of marriage, I hear. And if she behaves dutifully, as she should do, to us both, she shall be the better ; for so I said before.

You shall manage all things, both mine and your own ; for I know little of land-matters. All my opposition to you shall be out of love, when I think you take too much upon you for your health.

It

It will be very pretty for you, I should think, to have a man of experience, in a long winter's evening, to sit down and tell you stories of foreign parts, and the customs of the nations he has consoled with. And I have fine curiosities of the Indian growth, such as ladies love, and some that even my niece Clary, when she was good, never saw. These, one by one, as you are kind to me (which I make no question of, because I shall be kind to you) shall all be yours.—Prettier entertainment by much, than sitting with a too smartish daughter, sometimes out of humour, and thwarting, and vexing, as daughters will, when women-grown especially (as I have heard you often observe); and thinking their parents old, without paying them the reverence due to years; when, as in your case, I make no sort of doubt, they are young enough to wipe their noses. You understand me, Madam.

As for me myself, it will be very happy, and I am delighted with the thinking of it, to have, after a pleasant ride, or so, a lady of like experience with myself, to come home to, and but one interest betwixt us: To reckon up our comings-in together; and what this day and this week has produced:—O how this will increase love!—Most mightily will it increase it?—And I believe I should never love you enough, or be able to shew you all my love.

I hope, Madam, there need not be *such* maiden niceties and hangings-off, as I may call them, between us, for hanging-off sake, as that you will deny me a line or two to this proposal, written down, altho' you would not answer me so readily when I spoke to you: Your daughter being, I suppose, hard by; for you looked round you, as if not willing to be overheard: So I resolved to write: That my writing may stand, as upon record, for my upright meaning; being none of your Lovelaces; you'll mark that, Madam; but a downright,

downright, true, honest, faithful Englishman. So hope you will not disdain to write a line or two to this my proposal: And I shall look upon it as a great honour, I will assure you, and be proud thereof.— What can I say more?—For you are your own mistress, as I am my own master: And you shall *always* be your own mistress: Be pleased to mark that; for so a lady of your prudence and experience ought to be.

This is a long letter. But the subject requires it; because I would not write twice where once would do: So would explain my sense and meaning at one time.

I have had writing in my head *two whole months* very near; but hardly knew how, being unpractised in these matters, to begin to write. And now, good lady, be favourable to

*Your most humble Lover,
and obedient Servant,*

ANT. HARLOWE.

Here's a letter of courtship, my dear!—And let me subjoin to it, that if now, or hereafter, I should treat this hideous lover, who is so free with me to my mother, with asperity, and you should be disgusted at it; I shall think you don't give me that preference in your love, which you have in mine.

And now, which shall I first give you; the answer of my mamma; or the dialogue that passed between the widow mother and the pert daughter, upon her letting the latter know that she had a letter.

I think you shall have the *dialogue*. But let me premise one thing; that if you *think* me too free, you must not let it run in your head, that I am writing of your uncle, or of my mother: But of a couple of old lovers, no matter whom. Reverence is too apt to be forgotten

forgotten by second persons, where the Reverend
forget first.

Well then, suppose my mamma, after twice coming into my closet to me, and as often going out, with very meaning features, and lips ready to burst open, but still closed, as it were by compulsion, a speech going off, in a slight cough, that never went near the lungs; grown more resolute, the third time of entrance, and sitting down by me, thus began.

Mother. I have a very serious matter to talk with you upon, Nancy, when you are disposed to attend to matters *within* ourselves, and not let matters *without* ourselves, wholly engross you.

A good *selver-ish* speech!—But I thought that friendship and gratitude, and humanity, were matters that ought to be deemed of the most *intimate* concern to us. But not to dwell upon her words:

Daughter. I am now disposed to attend to every thing my mamma is disposed to say to me...

M. Why then, child.—Why then, my dear—
[And the good lady's face looked *so* plump! *so* smooth! and *so* shining!—]—I see you are all attention, Nancy!—But don't be surprised!—Don't be uneasy!—But I have—I have—Where is it?—[And yet it lay next her heart, never another near it:—So no difficulty to have found it.]—I have a *letter*, my dear!—[And out from her bosom it came: But she still held it in her hand.]—I have a *letter*, child.—It is—It is—It is from—*from a gentleman, I assure you!*—lifting up her head, and smiling.

There is no delight to a daughter, thought I, in such surprises, as seem to be *collecting*: I will deprive my mamma of the satisfaction of making a *gradual* discovery.

D. From Mr. Antony Harlowe, I suppose, Madam?

M. [Lips

M. [Lips drawn closer: Eye raised] Why, my dear!—But how, I wonder, could you think of Mr. Antony Harlowe?

D. How, Madam, could I think of any-body else?

M. How could you think of any-body *else*!—angrily, and drawing back her face; but do you know the subject, Nancy?

D. You have told it, Madam, by your manner of breaking it to me. But, indeed, I questioned not, that he had *two* motives in his visits here—*Both* equally agreeably to me; for all that family love me dearly.

M. No love lost, if so, between you and them.—But this [*Rising*] is what I get—So like your papa!—I never could open my heart to *him*!

D. Dear Madam excuse me. Be so good as to open your heart to *me*.—I don't love the Harlowes. But pray excuse me.

M. You have put me quite out with your forward temper!—[Angrily sitting down again].

D. I will be all patience and attention. May I be allowed to read his letter?

M. I wanted to *advise* with you upon it.—But you are such a strange creature!—You are always for answering one, before one speaks!

D. You'll be so good as to forgive me, Madam.—But I thought every-body (he among the rest) knew, that you had always declared against a second marriage.

M. And so I have. But then it was in the mind I was in. Things may offer—

I stared.

M. Nay, don't be surprised!—I don't intend—I don't intend—

D. Not, perhaps, in *the mind you are in*, Madam.

M. Pert creature!—*Rising again*!—We shall quarrel, I see!—There's no—

D. Once

D. Once more, dear Madam, I beg your excuse.
I will attend in silence.—Pray, Madam, sit down again.—Pray do.—[She sat down]—May I see the letter?

No; there are some things in it, you won't like.—Your temper is known, I find, to be unhappy.—But nothing *bad* against you; intimations, on the contrary, that you shall be the better for him, if you oblige him.

Not a living soul but the Harlowes, I said, thought me ill-temper'd: And I was contented that they should, who could do as they had done by the most universally acknowledged sweetnes in the world.

Here we broke out a little; but at last, she read me some of the passages in it.—But not the *most* mightily ridiculous; yet I could hardly keep my countenance neither. And when she had done;

M. Well now, Nancy, tell me what you think of it?

D. Nay, pray, Madam, tell me what you think of it?

M. I expect to be answered by an answer; not by a question!—You don't *use* to be shy to speak your mind.

D. Not when my mamma commands me to do so.

M. Then speak it now.

D. Without hearing it at all?

M. Speak to what you *have* heard.

D. Why then, Madam,—You won't be my mamma HARLOWE, if you give way to it.

M. I am surprised at your assurance, Nancy!

D. I mean, Madam, you will then be my mamma HARLOWE.

M. Oh dear heart!—But I am not a fool.

And her colour went and came.

D. Dear, Madam!—(But indeed, I don't love a Harlowe,

Harlowe, that's what I meant). I *am* your child, and *must* be your child, do what you will.

M. A very pert one, I am sure, as ever mother bore! And you *must* be my child, do what I *will*!—As much as to say, you would not, if you could help it, if I—

D. How could I have such a thought!—It would be *forward*, indeed, if I had—when I don't know what your *mind* is, as to the proposal:—When the proposal is so very advantageous a one too.

M. [looking a little less disposed] Why, indeed, ten thousand pounds—

D. And to be sure of outliving him, Madam! This staggered her a little—

M. *Sure!* Nobody can be sure!—But it is very likely, that—

D. Not at all, Madam; you was going to read something (but stopt) about his constitution: His sobriety is well known—Why, Madam, these gentlemen who have been at sea, and in different climates, and come home to relax from cares in a temperate one, and are sober—are the likeliest to live long of any men in the world.—Don't you see that his very skin is a fortification of buff?

M. Strange creature!

D. God forbid, that any body I love and honour, should *marry a man*, in hopes to *bury him*.—But suppose, Madam, at your time of life.—

M. *My* time of life!—Dear heart!—What is my time of life, pray?

D. Not old, Madam; and that may be your danger!

As I hope to live (my dear) my mamma smiled, and looked not displeased with me.

M. Why, indeed, child—Why, indeed, I must needs say—And then I should choose to do nothing (forward as you are sometimes) to hurt *you*.

D. Why,

D. Why, as to that, Madam---I can't expect you should deprive yourself of any satisfaction—

M. Satisfaction, my dear!---I don't say, it would be a *satisfaction*.—But could I do any thing that would benefit *you*, it would perhaps be an inducement to hold *one* conference upon the subject.

D. My fortune already will be more considerable than my match, if I am to have Mr. Hickman.

M. Why so?—Mr. Hickman's fortune is enough to intitle him to *yours*.

D. If *you* think so, that's enough.

M. Not but I should think the worse of myself, if I desired any body's death; but I think, as you say, Mr. Antony Harlowe is a healthy man, and bids fair for a long life.

Bless me, thought I, how shall I do to know whether this be an objection or a recommendation!

D. Will you forgive me, Madam?

M. What would the girl say.—Looking as if she was half afraid to hear what.

D. Only that if you marry a man of *his* time of life, you stand two chances instead of one, to be a nurse at *your* time of life.

M. Saucebox!

D. Dear Madam!----What I mean is only, that these healthy old men sometimes fall into lingering disorders all at once. And I humbly conceive, that the infirmities of age are too uneasily borne with, where the remembrance of the pleasanter season comes not in to relieve the healthier of the two.

M. A strange girl!---I always told you, that you know either too much to be argued with, or too little for me to have patience with you.

D. I can't but say, I would be glad of your commands, Madam, how to behave myself to Mr. Harlowe next time he comes.

M. How

M. How to behave yourself!---Why, if you retire with contempt of him, when he next comes, it will be but as you have been used to do of late.

D. Then he *is* to come again, Madam?

M. And suppose he be?

D. I can't help it, if it be your pleasure, Madam.---He desires a line in answer to his fine letter. If he comes, it will be in pursuance of that line, I presume?

M. None of your arch and pert leers, girl!-----You know I won't bear them. I had a mind to hear what you would say to this matter. I have not wrote; but I shall presently.

D. It is mighty good of you, Madam; I hope the man will think so; to answer his first application by letter.---Pity he *should write twice, if once will do.*

M. That fetch won't let you into my intention, as to what I shall write: It is too saucily put.

D. Perhaps I can guess at your intention, Madam, were it to become me so to do.

M. Perhaps I would not make a *Mr. Hickman* of any gentleman; using him the worse for respecting me.

D. Nor, perhaps, would I, Madam, if I *liked* his respects.

M. I understand you. Put, perhaps, it is in *your* power to make me hearken, or not, to Mr. Harlowe.

D. Young gentlemen, who have probably a great deal of time before them, need not be in haste for a wife. Mr. Hickman, poor man! must stay his time, or take his remedy.

M. He bears more from you than a man *ought*.

D. Then, I doubt, he gives a *reason* for the treatment he meets with.

M. Provoking creature!

D. I have but one request to make

M. A *dutiful* one, I suppose. V

D. That if *you* marry, *I* may be permitted to live single.

M. Perverse creature!----I am sure.

D. How can I expect, Madam, that you should refuse such terms? *Ten thousand pounds!*----At the *least* ten thousand pounds!----A very handsome proposal!----So many fine things too, to give you one by one! Dearest Madam, forgive me!----I hope it is not yet so far gone, that raillyng *this man* will be thought want of duty to *you*.

M. Your raillyng of *him*, and your reverence to *me*, it is plain, have *one* source.

D. I hope not, Madam. But ten thousand pounds--

M. Is no unhandsome proposal.

D. Indeed I think so. I hope, Madam, you will not be behindhand with him in generosity.

M. He won't be ten thousand pounds the better for me, if he survive me.

D. No, Madam, he can't expect that, as you have a daughter, and as he is a *batchelor*, and *has not a child*.—poor old soul!

M. Old soul, Nancy!—And thus to call him for being a *batchelor*, and not having a child?—Does this become you?

D. Not old soul for that, Madam.—But half the sum, five thousand pounds; you can't engage for less, Madam.

M. That sum has your approbation then?—Looking as if she'd be even with me.

D. As he leaves it to your generosity, Madam, and as the reward of his kindness to *you*, it can't be less.—Do, dear Madam, permit me, without incurring your displeasure, to call him poor old soul again.

M. Never was such a whimsical creature!—Turning away [for I believe I looked very archly; at least I intended to do so] to hide her involuntary smile.

smiling.—I hate that wicked fly look. You give yourself very free airs—Don't you?

D. I snatched her hand, and kiss'd it—My dear mamma, be not angry with your girl!—You have told me, that you was very lively formerly.

M. Formerly! Good luck!—But were I to encourage his proposals, you may be sure, that for Mr. Hickman's sake, as well as yours, I should make a wife agreement.

D. You have both lived to years of prudence, Madam.

M. Yes, I suppose I am an *old soul* too.

D. He also is for making a wife agreement, or hinting at one, at least.

M. Well, the short and the long I suppose is this: I have not your consent to marry?

D. Indeed, Madam, you have not my *wishes* to marry.

M. Let me tell you, that if prudence consists in wishing well to *one's self*, I see not but the *young flirts* are as prudent as the *old souls*.

D. Dear Madam, would you blame me, if to wish you not to marry Mr. Antony Harlowe, is wishing well to *myself*?

M. You are mighty witty. I wish you were as dutiful.

D. I am more dutiful, I hope, than witty; or I should be a fool, as well as a saucebox.

M. Let *me* judge of both—Parents are only to live for their children, let them deserve it or not. That's *their* dutiful notion!

D. Heaven forbid that I should wish, if there be two interests between my mamma and me, that my mamma postpone her own for mine! or give up any thing that would add to the real comforts of her life, to oblige me!—Tell me, my dear mamma, if you think this proposal will?

M. I say, That ten thousand pounds is such an acquisition to one's family, that the offer of it deserves a civil return.

D. Not the *offer*, Madam: the *chance* only!—If you have a view to an increase of family, the money may provide—

M. You cannot keep within tolerable bounds!—That saucy fleer, I cannot away with—

D. Dearest, dearest Madam, forgive me, but *old soul* ran in my head again!—Nay, indeed and upon my word, I won't be robbed of that charming smile; and again I kissed her hand.

M. Away, bold creature! Nothing can be so provoking, as to be made to smile, when one would *choose*, and *ought*, to be angry.

D. But, dear Madam, if it be to *be*, I presume you won't think of it before next winter.

M. What now would the pert one be at?

D. Because he only proposes to entertain you with pretty stories of foreign nations in a winter's evening. Dearest, dearest Madam, let me have the reading of his letter thro.' I will forgive him all he says about *me*.

M. It may be a very difficult thing perhaps, for a man of the best sense to write a Love-letter, that may not be cavilled at.

D. That's because lovers, in their letters, hit not the medium:—They either write too much nonsense, or too little. But do you call this *old soul's* letter (no more will I call him *old soul*, if I can help it) a Love-letter?

M. Well, well, I see you are averse to this matter. I am not to be *your mamma*; you will live single, if I marry. I had a mind to see if generosity govern'd you in your views. I shall pursue my own inclinations; and if they should happen to be suitable

to

to yours, pray let me for the future be better rewarded by you than hitherto I have been.

And away she flung, without staying for a reply.— Vex'd, I dare say, that I did not better approve of the proposal:— Were it only that the merit of denying might have been all her own, and to lay the stronger obligation upon her saucy daughter.

She wrote such a widow-like refusal when she went from me, as might not exclude hope in any other wooer; whatever it may do in Mr. Tony Harlowe.

It will be my part to take care to beat her off of the visit she half-promises to make him, upon condition of withdrawing his suit, as you will observe in hers: for who knows what effect the old bachelor's exoticks (*Far-fetched and dear bought*, you know is a proverb) might otherwise have upon a woman's mind, wanting nothing but unneccesaries, gewgaw, and fineries, and offered such as are not easily to be met with, or purchased?

Well, but now I give you leave to read here, in this place, the copy of my mother's answer to your uncle's letter. Not one comment will I make upon it. I know my duty better. And here therefore, taking the liberty to hope, that I may, in your present less disagreeable, if not wholly agreeable, situation, provoke a smile from you, I conclude myself,

Your ever-affectionate and faithful,

ANNA HOWE.

*Mrs. ANNABELLA HOWE, To ANTHONY
HARLOWE, Esq;*

Mr. Anthony Harlowe.

S I R,

Friday, May 19.

IT is not usual, I believe, for our Sex to answer by pen and ink, the first letter on these occasions.

G 3

The

'The *first* letter!—How odd is that!—As if I expected another; which I do not.—But then, I think, as I do not judge proper to encourage your proposal, there is no reason why I should not answer in civility, where so great a civility is intended. Indeed I was always of opinion, that a person was intitled to That, and not to ill-usage, because he had a respect for me. And so I have often and often told my daughter.

A woman, I think, makes but a poor figure in a man's eye afterwards, and does no reputation to her Sex neither, when she behaves like a tyrant to him beforehand.

To be sure, Sir, if I were to change my condition, I know not a gentleman whose proposal could be more agreeable. Your nephew and nieces have enough without you: My daughter is a fine fortune without me, and I should take care to double it, living or dying, were I to do such a thing: So nobody need to be the worse for it. But Nancy would not think so.

All the comfort I know of in children, is, that when young they do with us what they will, and all is pretty in them to their very faults; and when they are grown up, they think their parents must live for them only; and deny themselves every thing for their sakes. I know Nancy could not bear a father-in-law. She would fly at the very thought of my being in earnest to give her one. Not that I stand in fear of my daughter neither: It is not fit I should. But she has her poor papa's spirit: A very violent one, that was—And one would not choose, you know, Sir, to enter into any affair, that, one knows, one must renounce a daughter for, or she a mother.—Except indeed one's heart were much in it:—which, I bless God, mine is not.

I have now been a widow these ten years; nobody to controul me:—And I am said not to bear controul:

So,

So, Sir, you and I are best as we are, I believe—nay, I am sure of it—For we want not what either has ; —having both more than we know what to do with. And I know I could not be in the least accountable for any of my ways.

My daughter indeed! tho' she is a fine girl, as girls go [She has too much sense indeed for her sex ; and knows she has it], is more a check to me than one would wish a daughter to be—For one would not be always snapping at each other: For she will soon be married ; and then not living together, we shall only come together when we are pleased, and stay away when we are not ; and so, like other lovers, never see any thing but the best sides of each other.

I own, for all this, that I love her dearly ; and she me, I dare say. So would not wish to provoke her to do otherwise. Besides, the girl is so much regarded every-where, that having lived so much of my prime a widow, I would not lay myself open to her censures, or even to her indifference, you know.

Your generous proposal requires all this explicitness. I thank you for your good opinion of me. When I know you acquiesce with this my civil refusal ; and indeed, Sir, I am as much in earnest in it, as if I had spoke broader ; I don't know, but Nancy and I may, with your permission, come to see your fine things ; for I am a great admirer of rarities that come from abroad.

So, Sir, let us only converse occasionally as we meet, as we used to do, without any other view to each other, than good wishes: Which I hope may not be lessen'd for this declining. And then I shall always think myself

Your obliged servant,

ANNABELLA HOWE.

I sent word by Mrs. Lorimer, that I would write an answer: But would take time for consideration. So hope, Sir, you won't think it a flight, I did not write sooner.

LETTER XXIV.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Sunday, May 21.

I AM too much disturbed in my mind, to think of any thing but revenge; or I had intended to give thee an account of Miss Harlowe's curious observations on the play. *Miss Harlowe's*, I say. Thou knowest that I hate the name of *Harlowe*; and I am exceedingly out of humour with her, and with her saucy friend.

What's the matter now, thou'l't ask?—Matter enough; for while we were at the play, Dorcas, who had her orders, and a key to her lady's chamber, as well as a master-key to her drawers and mahogany chest, closet-key and all, found means to come at some of Miss Howe's last-written letters. The vigilant wench was directed to them by seeing her lady take a letter out of her stays, and put it to the others, before she went out with me—Afraid as the women upbraidingly tell me, that I should find it there.

Dorcas no sooner found them, than she assembled three ready writers of the *non-apparens*, and Sally, and she and they employed themselves with the utmost diligence, in making extracts, according to former directions, from these cursed letters, for my use. *Cursed*, I may well call them—Such abuses, such virulence! O this little fury Miss Howe!—Well might her saucy friend (who has been equally free with me, or the occasion could not have been given) be

be so violent as she lately was,—at my endeavouring to come at one of these letters.

I was sure, that this fair-one, at so early an age, with a constitution so firm, health so blooming, eyes so sparkling, could not be absolutely, and from her own vigilance, so guarded and so apprehensive, as I have found her to be.—Sparkling eyes, Jack, when the poetical tribe have said all they can for them, are an infallible sign of a rogue, or room for a rogue, in the heart.

Thou may'st go on with thy preachments, and Lord M. with his wisdom of nations, I am now more assured of her than ever. And now my revenge is up, and join'd with my love, all resistance must fall before it. And most solemnly do I swear, that Miss Howe shall come in for her snack.

And here, just now, is another letter brought from the same little virulent devil.—I hope to procure transcripts from that too, very speedily, if it be put to the rest; for the saucy lady is resolved to go to church this morning, not so much from a spirit of devotion, I have reason to think, as to try whether she can go out without check or controul, or my attendance.

I HAVE been denied breakfasting with her. Indeed she was a little displeased with me last night; because, on our return from the play, I obliged her to pass the rest of the night with the women and me, in their parlour, and to stay till near One. She told me at parting, that she expected to have the whole next day to herself.—I had not read the extracts then; so was all affectionate respect, awe, and distance; for I had resolved to begin a new course, and, if possible, to banish all jealousy and suspicion from her heart: And yet I had no reason to be much troubled at her past suspicions; since, if a woman will continue with

a man whom she suspects, when she can get from him, or thinks she can, I am sure it is a very hopeful sign.

SHE is gone. Slipt down before I was aware. She had ordered a chair, on purpose to exclude my personal attendance. But I had taken proper precautions. Will, attended by her consent; Peter, the house-servant, was within Will's call.

I had, by Dorcas, represented her in danger from Singleton, in order to dissuade her from going at all, unless she allowed me to attend her; but I was answer'd, That if there was no cause of fear at the playhouse, when there were but *two* playhouses, surely there was less at church, when there were so *many* churches. The chairmen were ordered to carry her to St. James's church.

But she would not be so careless of obliging me, if she knew what I have already come at, and how the women urge me on; for they are continually complaining of the restraint they lie under; in their behaviour; in their attendance; neglecting all their concerns in the front-house; and keeping this elegant back one intirely free from company, that she may have no suspicion of them. They doubt not my generosity, they say: But *why* for my own sake, in Lord M.'s style, *should I make so long a harvest of so little corn?*—Women, ye reason well. I think I will begin my operations the moment she comes in.

I HAVE come at the letter brought her from Miss Howe to-day.—Plot, conjuration, sorcery, witchcraft, all going forward!—I shall not be able to see this *Miss Harlowe* with patience. As the nymphs below say, *Why is night necessary?*—And Sally and Polly upbraidingly remind me of my first attempts upon themselves.—Yet force answers not my end—And yet it may, if there be truth in that part of the

libertines

libertines creed, *That once subdued, is always subdued!* And what woman answers affirmatively to the question?

SHE is returned---But refuses to admit me---Desires to have the day to herself. Dorcas tells me, that she believes her denial is from motives of piety---Oons, Jack, is there impiety in seeing me!---Would it not be the highest act of piety, to reclaim me? And is this to be done by her refusing to see me, when she is in a devout frame than usual? But I hate her, hate her heartily!---She is old, ugly, and deformed.---But O the blasphemy!---Yet she is an Harlowe.---And I hate her for that.

But since I must not see her [She will be mistress of her *own will*, and of her *time truly!*], let me fill up mine, by telling thee what I have come at.

The first letter the women met with, is dated April 27. Where can she have put the preceding ones? It mentions Mr. Hickman as a busy fellow between them. Hickman had best take care of himself. She says in it, *I hope you have no cause to repent returning my Norris—It is forthcoming on demand.* Now, what the devil can this mean!---Her Norris forthcoming on demand!---The devil take me, if I am *out-Norris'd!*---If such innocents can allow themselves to plot, to *Norris*, well may I.

She is sorry, that *her Hannah can't be with her.*---And what if she could?—What could Hannah do for her in such a house as this?

The women in the house are to be found out in one breakfasting. The women are enraged at both the correspondents for this; and more than ever make a point of conquering her. I had a good mind to give them Miss Howe in full property. Say but the word, Jack, and it shall be done.

She

She is glad that Miss Harlowe had thoughts of taking me at my word. She wondered. I did not offer again. Advises her, if I don't soon, not to stay with me. Cautions her to keep me at distance; not to permit the least familiarity—See, Jack—See, Belford---exactly as I thought!—Her vigilance all owing to a cool friend; who can sit down quietly, and give that advice, which, in her own case, she could not take.—She tells her, *it is my interest to be honest*—INTEREST, fools!—I thought these girls knew, that my *interest* was ever subservient to my *pleasure*.

What would I give to come at the copies of the letters to which those of Miss Howe are answers!

The next letter is dated May 3. In this the little termagant expresses her astonishment, that her mother should write to Miss Harlowe, to forbid her to correspond with her daughter. Mr. Hickman, she says, is of opinion, *that she ought not to obey her mother*. How the creeping fellow trims between both! I am afraid, that I must punish him, as well as this virago; and I have a scheme rumbling in my head, that wants but half an hour's musing to bring into form, that will do my business upon both. I cannot bear, that the parental authority should be thus despised, thus trampled under-foot—But observe the vixen, 'Tis well he is of her opinion; for her mother having set her up, *she must have somebody to quarrel with*.—Could a Lovelace have allowed himself a greater licence? This girl's a devilish rake in her heart. Had she been a man, and one of us, she'd have outdone us all in enterprize and spirit.

She wants but very little farther provocation, she says, *to fly privately to London*. And if she does, she will not leave her till she sees her either honourably married, or quit of the wretch. Here, Jack, the transcriber Sally has added a prayer—‘For the Lord’s sake, dear Mr. Lovelace, get this fury to London!’

—Her

—Her fate, I can tell thee, Jack, if we had her among us, should not be so long deciding as her friend's. What a gantlope would she run, when I had done with her, among a dozen of her own pitiless sex, whom my charmer shall never see!—But more of this anon.

I find by this letter, that my saucy captive had been drawing the characters of every varlet of ye. Nor am I spared in it more than you. *The man's a fool, to be sure, my dear.* Let me die, if they either of them find me one. *A silly fellow, at least.* Cursed contemptible!—*I see not but they are a set of infernals*—There's for thee, Belford—and *be the Beelzebub.* There's for thee, Lovelace!—And yet she would have her friend marry a Beelzebub.—And what have any of us done, to the knowledge of Miss Harlowe, that she should give such an account of us, as should warrant so much abuse from Miss Howe?—But that's to come!

She blames her, for *not admitting Miss Partington to her bed*—*Watchful as you are, what could have happen'd?*—*If violence were intended, he would not stay for the night.* Sally writes upon this hint—*See, Sir, what is expected from you. An hundred and an hundred times have we told you of this.*—And so they have. But, to be sure, the advice from them was not of half the efficacy as it would be from Miss Howe.—*You might have sat up after her, or not gone to bed.* But can there be such apprehensions between them, yet the one advise her to stay, and the other resolve to wait my imperial motion for marriage? I am glad I know that.

She approves of my proposal about Mrs. Fretchville's house. She puts her upon expecting settlements; upon naming a day: And concludes, with insisting upon her writing, notwithstanding her mother's

ther's prohibition: or bids her *take the consequence*.
Undutiful wretches!

Thou wilt say, to thyself, by this time, And can this proud and insolent girl be the same Miss Howe, who fighed for honest Sir George Colmar; and who, but for this her beloved friend, would have followed him in all his broken fortunes, when he was obliged to quit the kingdom?

Yes, she is the very same. And I always found in others, as well as in myself, that a first passion thoroughly subdued, made the conqueror of it a rōver; the conqueress a tyrant.

Well, but now, comes mincing in a letter from one who has *the honour of dear Miss Howe's commands*, to acquaint Miss Harlowe, that Miss Howe is *excessively concerned for the concern she has given her*.

I have great temptations, on this occasion, says the prim Gothamite, *to express my own resentments upon your present state*.

My own resentments!---And why did he not fall into this temptation?---Why, truly, because he knew not what that state was, which gave him so tempting a subject---*Only by conjecture*, and so forth.

He then dances in his style, as he does in his gait! To be sure, to be sure, he must have made the grand tour, and come home by the way of Tipperary.

And being moreover forbid, says the prancer, *to enter into the cruel subject*--This prohibition was a mercy to thee, friend Hickman!---But why *cruel subject*, if thou knowest not what it is, but *conjecturest* only from the disturbance it gives to a girl, that is her mother's disturbance, will be thy disturbance, and the disturbance, in turn, of every-body with whom she is intimately acquainted, unless I have the humbling of her?

In another letter, *She approves of her design to leave me, if she can be received by her friends*.

Has

Has heard some strange stories of me, that shew me to be the worst of men. Had I a dozen lives, I might have forfeited them all twenty crimes ago.----An odd way of reckoning, Jack!

Miss Betterton, Miss Lockyer, are named---*The man (so she irreverently calls me !), she says, is a villain. Let me perish if I am called a villain for nothing !----She will have her uncle (as Miss Harlowe desires) sounded about receiving her. Dorcas is to be attach'd to her interest : My letters are to be come at by surprize or trick--See, Jack !*

She is alarmed at my attempt to come at a letter of hers.

Were I to come at the knowledge of her freedoms with my character, she says, she should be afraid to stir out without a guard.---I would advise the vixen to get her guard ready.

I am at the head of a gang of wretches [Thee, Jack, and thy brother varlets, she owns she means], who join together to betray innocent creatures, and to support one another in their villainies.---What sayest thou to this, Belford ?

She wonders not at her melancholy reflections for meeting me, for being forced upon me, and tricked by me.---I hope, Jack, thou'lt have done preaching after this !

But she comforts her, that she will be both a warning and example to all her Sex.---I hope the Sex will thank me for this.

The nymphs had not time, they say, to transcribe all that was worthy of my resentment in this letter---So I must find an opportunity to come at it myself. Noble rant, they say, it contains.---But I am a seducer, and a hundred vile fellows, in it---*And the devil, it seems, took possession of my heart, and of the hearts of all her friends, in the same dark hour, in order to provoke her to meet me. Again, There is a fate in her error, she says---Why then should she grieve ?*

—Adversity

---Adversity is her shining-time, and I cannot tell what
---Yet never to thank the man to whom she owes
the shine!

In the next, Wicked as I am, *she* fears I must be
her lord and master.---I hope so.

She retracts what she said against me in her last.---
My behaviour to my Rosebud; Miss Harlowe to take
possession of Mrs. Fretchville's house; I to stay at
Mrs. Sinclair's; the stake I have in my country; my
reversions; my œconomy: my person; my address;
all are brought in my favour, to induce her now not
to leave me. How do I love to puzzle these long-
fighted girls!

Yet my teasing ways, it seems, are intolerable.---
Are women only to tease, I trow.---The Sex may
thank themselves for learning me to out-teaze them.
So the headstrong Charles XII. of Sweden learned
the Czar Peter to beat him, by continuing a war with
the Muscovites against the antient maxims of his
kingdom.

May eternal vengeance PURSUE the villain [Thank
heaven, she does not say overtake], *if he give room to*
doubt his honour!---Women can't swear, Jack---Sweet
souls! they can only curse.

I am faid, *to doubt her love*.---Have I not reason?
And she, *to doubt my ardor?*---Ardor, Jack!---Why,
'tis very right---Women, as Miss Howe says, and
as every Rake knows, love ardors!

She apprizes her of the ill success of the application
made to her uncle.---By Hickman, no doubt!---I must
have this fellow's ears in my pocket, very quickly,
I believe.

She says, *She is equally shocked and enraged against*
all her family: Mrs. Norton's weight has been try'd
upon Mrs. Harlowe, as well as Mr. Hickman's upon
the uncle: But never were there, says the vixen, such
determin'd brutes in the world. Her uncle concludes her
ruin'd

run'd already.—Is not that a call upon me, as well as a reproach?—They all expected applications from her when in distress—but were resolved not to stir an inch to save her life. She was accused of premeditation and contrivance. Miss Howe is concerned, she tells her, for the revenge my pride may put me upon taking for the distance she has kept me at.—And well she may.—She has now but one choice [for her cousin Morden, it seems, is set against her too], and that's to be mine.—An act of necessity, of convenience.—Thy friend, Jack, to be already made a woman's convenience!—Is this to be borne by a Lovelace?

I shall make great use of this letter. From Miss Howe's hints of what passed between her uncle Harlowe and Hickman [It must be Hickman], I can give room for my *invention* to play; for she tells her, that *she will not reveal all*. I must endeavour to come at this letter myself; I must have the very words; extracts will not do. This letter, when I have it, must be my compass to steer by.

The fire of friendship then blazes out and crackles. I never before imagin'd, that so fervent a friendship could subsist between two sister-beauties, both toasts. But even here it may be inflamed by opposition, and by that contradiction, which gives spirit to female spirits of a warm and romantic turn.

She raves about *coming up*, if by so doing *she could prevent so noble a creature from stooping too low, or save her from ruin*—One reed to support another! These girls are frenzical in their friendship. They know not what a steady fire is.

How comes it to pass, that I cannot help being pleased with this virago's spirit, tho' I suffer by it? Had I her but here, I'd engage in a week's time, to teach her submission without reserve. What pleasure should I have in breaking such a spirit! I should wish for her but for one month, in all, I think. She would

would be too tame and spiritless for me after that. How sweetly pretty to see the two lovely friends when humbled and tame, both sitting in the darkest corner of a room, arm in arm, weeping and sobbing for each other!— ---And I their emperor, their then acknowledged emperor, reclined on a sophee, in the same room, Grand Signor like, uncertain to which I should first throw out my handkerchief?

Mind the girl: *She is enraged at the Harlowes*: She is angry at her own mother; *she is exasperated against her foolish and low-vanity'd Lovelace*.—FOOLISH, a little toad! [God forgive me for calling a virtuous girl a toad!] *Let us stoop to lift the wretch out of his dirt, tho' we soil our fingers in doing it!* He has not been guilty of direct indecency to you.—It seems extraordinary to Miss Howe that I have not.—Nor dare he—She should be sure of that. If women have such things in their heads, why should not I in my heart?—Not so much of a devil as that comes to neither. Such villainous intentions would have shewn themselves before now, if I had them.—Lord help them!—

She then puts her friend upon urging for settlements, licence, and so forth.—No room for delicacy now, she says.—And tells her what she shall say, to bring all forward from me.—Dost think, Jack, that I should not have carried my point long ago, but for this vixen?—She reproaches her for having MODESTY'D away, as she calls it, more than one opportunity, *she ought not to have slipt*.—Thus thou seest, that the noblest of the sex mean nothing in the world by their shyness and distance, but to pound a poor fellow, whom they dislike not, when he comes into their purlieus.

Annexed to this letter is a paper the most saucy that ever was wote of a mother by a daughter. There are in it such free reflections upon widows and bachelors, that I cannot but wonder how Miss Howe came by her learning. Sir George Colmar, I can tell thee,

was

was a greater fool than thy friend, if she had it all for nothing.

The contents of this paper acquaint Miss Harlowe, that her uncle Antony has been making proposals of marriage to her mother. The old fellow's heart ought to be a tough one, if he succeed, or she who broke that of a much worthier man, the late Mr. Howe, will soon get rid of him. But be this as it may, the stupid family is more irreconcileable than ever to their goddess daughter, for old Antony's thoughts of marrying: So I am more secure of her than ever; since, as Miss Howe says, *she can have but one choice now*. Though this disgusts my pride, yet I believe, at last, my tender heart will be moved in her favour. For I did not wish, that she should have nothing but persecution and distress.—But why loves she the *brutes*, as Miss Howe justly calls them, so much; me so little? ——But I have still more unpardonable transcripts from other letters.

LETTER XXV.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

THE next letter is of such a nature, that, I dare say, these proud varlettes would not have had it fall into my hands for the world.

I see by it to what her displeasure with me, in relation to my proposals, was owing. They were not summ'd up, it seems, with the warmth, with the ardor, which she had expected. This whole letter was transcribed by Dorcas, to whose lot it fell. Thou shalt have copies of them all at full length shortly.

Men of our cast, this little devil says, she fancies, cannot have the ardors that honest men have. Miss Howe has very pretty fancies, Jack. Charming girl! Would to heaven I knew whether my fair-one answers her as freely

freely as she writes ! 'Twould vex a man's heart, that this virago should have come honestly by her fancies.

Who knows but I may have half a dozen creatures to get off my hands, before I engage for life ? --- Yet, lest this should mean me a compliment, as if I would reform, she adds her belief, *that she must not expect me to be honest on this side my grand climacteric.* She has an high opinion of her Sex, to think they can charm so long, with a man so well acquainted with their identicalness.

He to suggest delays, she says, from a compliment to be paid to Lord M ! --- Yes, I, my dear -- Because a man has not been accustomed to be dutiful, must he never be dutiful? --- In so important a case as this too ; the hearts of his whole family engaged in it ? You did indeed, says she, *want an interposing friend* --- But were I to have been in your situation, I would have tore his eyes out, and left it to his own heart to furnish the reason for it. See ! see ! What sayest thou to this Jack ?

Villain -- Fellow that he is ! follow. And for what ? Only for wishing that the next day were to be my happy one ; and for being dutiful to my nearest relation.

It is the cruellest of fates, she says, for a woman to be forced to have a man whom her heart despises --- That is what I wanted to be sure of. --- I was afraid, that my beloved was too conscious of her talents ; of her superiority ! --- I was afraid that she indeed despised me ; and I cannot bear it. But, Belford, I do not intend that this lady should be bound down by so cruel a fate. Let me perish, if I marry a woman who has given her most intimate friend reason to say, she despises me ! --- A Lovelace to be despised, Jack !

His clenched fist to his forehead on your leaving him in just displeasure --- that is, when she was not satisfied with my ardors, and please ye ! --- I remember the motion : But her back was toward me at the time.

Are

Are these watchful ladies all eye?—But observe her wish, *I wish it had been a poll-ax, and in the hands of his worst enemy.*—I will have patience, Jack; I will have patience! My day is at hand—Then will I steel my heart with these remembrances.

But here is a scheme to be thought of, in order to get my fair prize out of my hands, in case I give her reason to suspect me.

This indeed alarms me. Now the contention becomes arduous. Now wilt thou not wonder, if I let loose my plotting genius upon them both. I will not be out-Norris'd, Belford.

But once more, *she has no notion, she says, that I can or dare to mean her dishonour.* But then the man is a fool—that's all—I should indeed be a fool, to proceed as I do, and mean matrimony! However, since you are thrown upon a fool, says she, marry the fool, at the first opportunity; and tho' I doubt that this man will be the most unmanageable of fools, as all witty and vain fools are, take him as a punishment, since you cannot as a reward—Is there any bearing this, Belford?

But in the letter I came at to day, while she was at church, her scheme is further opened, and a cursed one it is.

Mr. Lovelace then transcribes, from his short-hand notes, that part of Miss Howe's letter, which relates to the design of engaging Mrs. Townsend (in case of necessity) to give her protection till Colonel Morden comes: And repeats his vows of revenge; especially for those words; that should be attempt any thing that would make him obnoxious to the laws of society, she might have a fair riddance of him, either by flight or the gallows; no matter which.

He then adds;—Tis my pride, to subdue girls who know too much to doubt their knowledge; and to convince them, that they know too little, to defend themselves

themselves from the inconveniencies of knowing too much.

How passion drives a man on ! I have written, as thou'l see, a prodigious quantity in a very few hours ! Now my resentments are warm, I will see, and perhaps will punish, this proud, this *double-arm'd* beauty. I have sent to tell her, that I must be admitted to sup with her. We have neither of us dined : She refused to drink tea in the afternoon.---And I believe neither of us will have much stomach to our supper.

LETTER XXVII.

Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE, To Miss HOWE.

Sunday morning, 7, May 21.

I WAS at the play last night with Mr. Lovelace and Miss Horton. It is, you know, a deep and most affecting tragedy in the reading. You have my remarks upon it, in the little book you made me write upon the principal acting plays. You will not wonder, that Miss Horton, as well as I, was greatly moved at the representation, when I tell you, and have some pleasure in telling you, that Mr. Lovelace himself was very sensibly touched with some of the most affecting scenes. I mention this in praise of the author's performance ; for I take Mr. Lovelace to be one of the most hard-hearted men in the world. Upon my word, my dear, I do.

His behaviour, however, on this occasion, and on our return, was unexceptionable, only that he would oblige me to stay to supper with the woman below, when we came back, and to sit up with him and them till near one o'clock this morning. I was resolved to be even with him ; and indeed I am not very sorry to have the pretence ; for I love to pass the Sundays by myself.

To

To have the better excuse to avoid his teasing, I am ready dressed to go to church this morning. I will only go to St. James's church, and in a *chair*; that I may be sure I can go out and come in when I please, without being obtruded upon by him, as I was twice before.

Near nine o'clock.

I have your kind letter of yesterday. He knows I have. And I shall expect, that he will be inquisitive next time I see him after your opinion of his proposals. I doubted not your approbation of them, and had written an answer on that presumption; which is ready for him. He must study for occasions of procrastination, and to disoblige me, if now any thing happens to set us at variance again.

He is very importunate to see me; he has desired to attend me to church. He is angry that I have declined to breakfast with him. I was sure that I should not be at my own liberty, if I had.—I bid Dorcas tell him, that I desired to have this day to myself; I would see him in the morning, as early as he pleased. She says, she knows not what ails him, but that he is out of humour with every-body.

He has sent again, in a peremptory manner. He warns me of Singleton. But surely, I sent him word, if he was not afraid of Singleton at the play-house last night, I need not at church to-day: So many churches to one play-house.—I have accepted of his servant's proposed attendance.—But he is quite displeased, it seems. I don't care. I will not be perpetually at his insolent beck.—Adieu, my dear, till I return. The chair waits. He won't stop me, sure, as I go down to it.

I DID not see him as I went down. He is, it seems, excessively out of humour. Dorcas says, Not with me neither, she believes: But something has vex'd

vex'd him. This is put on, perhaps, to make me dine with him. But I won't if I can help it. I shan't get rid of him for the rest of the day, if I do.

HE was very earnest to dine with me. But I was resolved to carry this one small point ; and so denied to dine myself. And indeed I was endeavouring to write to my cousin Morden ; and had begun three different letters, without being able to please myself ; so uncertain and so unpleasing is my situation.

He was very busy in writing, Dorcas says, and pursued it without dining, because I denied him my company.

He afterwards *demanded*, as I may say, to be admitted to afternoon tea with me : And appealed by Dorcas to his behaviour to me last night ; as if, as I sent him word by her, he thought he had a merit in being unexceptionable. However, I repeated my promise to meet him as early as he pleased in the morning, or to breakfast with him.

Dorcas says, he raved. I heard him loud, and I heard his servant fly from him, as I thought. You, my dearest friend, say, in one of yours that you must have somebody to be angry at when your mother sets you up — I should be very loth to draw comparisons.—But the workings of passion, when indulg'd, are but too much alike, whether in man or woman.

HE has just sent me word, that he insists upon supping with me. As we had been in a good train for several days past, I thought it not prudent to break with him, for little matters. Yet, to be, in a manner, threaten'd into his will, I know not how to bear that.

WHILE

WHILE I was considering, he came up, and, tapping at my door, told me, in a very angry tone, he must see me this night. He could not rest, till he had been told what he had done to deserve this treatment.

I must go to him, Yet perhaps he has nothing new to say to me.—I shall be very angry with him.

As the Lady could not know what Mr. Lovelace's designs were, nor the cause of his ill humour, it will not be improper to pursue the subject from his letter.

Having described his angry manner of demanding, in person, her company at supper ; he proceeds as follows.

"Tis hard, answered the fair Perverse, that I am to be so little my own mistress. I will meet you in the dining-room half an hour hence.

I went down to wait that half-hour. All the women set me hard to give her cause for this tyranny. They demonstrated, as well from the nature of the sex, as of the case, that I had nothing to hope for from my tameness, and could meet with no worse treatment, were I to be guilty of the last offence.—They urged me vehemently to *try* at least what effect some greater familiarities, than I had ever used with her, would have : And their arguments being strengthened by my just resentments on the discoveries I had made, I was resolved to take some liberties, and, as they were received, to take still greater, and lay all the fault upon her tyranny. In this humour I went up, and never had paralytic so little command of his joints, as I had, as I walked about the dining-room, attending her motions.

With an erect mien she enter'd, her face averted, her lovely bosom swelling, and the more charmingly protuberant for the erectness of her mien. O Jack !

that sullenness and reserve should give this haughty maid new charms ! But in every attitude, in every humour, in every gesture, is beauty beautiful.—By her averted face, and indignant aspect, I saw the dear insolent was disposed to be angry—But by the fierceness of mine, as my trembling hand seized hers, I soon made fear her predominant passion. And yet the moment I beheld her, my heart was dastardized, damp'd, and reverenced over. Surely this is an angel, Jack!—And yet, had she not been known to be a female, they would not from *babyhood* have dressed her as such, nor would she, but upon that conviction, have continued the dress.

Let me ask, you, Madam, I beseech you to tell me, what I have done to deserve this distant treatment?

And let me ask 'you, Mr. Lovelace, why are my retirements to be thus invaded?—What can you have to say to me since last night, that I went with you so much against my will to the play? And after sitting up with you, equally against my will, till a very late hour?—

This I have to say, Madam, that I cannot bear to be kept at this distance from you under the same roof. I have a thousand things to say, to talk of, relating to our present and future prospects; but when I want to open my whole soul to you, you are always contriving to keep me at a distance; you make me inconsistent with myself; your heart is set upon delays; you must have views that you will not own. Tell me, Madam, I conjure you to tell me, this moment, without subterfuge or reserve, in what light am I to appear to you in future? I cannot bear this distance; the suspense you hold me in I cannot bear.

In what light, Mr. Lovelace? In no bad light, I hope.—Pray, Mr. Lovelace, do not grasp my hands

so hard [endeavouring to withdraw her hands]. Pray let me go—

You hate me, Madam—

I hate nobody, Sir—

You *hate me*, Madam, repeated I.

Instigated and resolved, as I came up, I wanted some new provocation. The devil indeed, as soon as my angel made her appearance, crept out of my heart; but he had left the door open, and was no farther off than my elbow.

You come up in no good temper, I see, Mr. Lovelace—But pray be not violent—I have done you no hurt—Pray be not violent—

Sweet creature! And I clasped one arm about her, holding one hand in my other—*You have done me no hurt! You have done me the greatest hurt!*—In what have I deserved the distance you keep me at?—I knew not what to say.

She struggled to disengage herself—Pray, Mr. Lovelace, let me withdraw. I know not why this is—I know not what I have done to offend you. I see you are come with a design to quarrel with me. If you would not terrify me with the ill humour you are in; permit me to withdraw. I will hear all you have to say another time—To-morrow morning, as I sent you word; but indeed you frighten me—I beseech you, if you have any value for me, permit me to withdraw.

Night, *mid-night*, is necessary, Belford. Surprize, terror, *must* be necessary to the ultimate trial of this charming creature, say the women below what they will—I could not hold my purposes—This was not the first time that I had *intended* to try if she could forgive.

I kissed her hand with a fervor, as if I would have left my lips upon it—Withdraw then, dearest and ever dear creature—Indeed I enter'd in a very ill

humour: I cannot bear the distance you so caustically keep me at—Withdraw, however, Madam, since it is your will to withdraw; and judge me generously; judge me but as I deserve to be judged; and let me hope to meet you to-morrow morning early, in such a temper as becomes our present situation, and my future hopes. And so saying I conducted her to the door, and left her there. But instead of going down to the women, went into my own chamber, and locked myself in; ashamed of being awed by her majestic loveliness and apprehensive virtue, into so great a change of purpose, notwithstanding I had such just provocations from the letters of her saucy friend, founded on her own representations of facts and situations between herself and me.

The Lady thus describes her terrors, and Mr. Lovelace's behaviour, on this occasion.

On my entering the dining-room, he took my hands in his, in such a humour, as I saw plainly he was resolved to quarrel with me—*And for what?*—I never in my life beheld in any-body such a wild, such an angry, such an impatient spirit. I was terrified; and instead of being as angry as I intended to be, I was forced to be all mildness. I can hardly remember what were his first words, I was so frightened. But, *You hate me, Madam! You hate me Madam!* were some of them—with such a fierceness—I wish'd myself a thousand miles distant from him. I hate nobody, said I; I thank God I hate no-body—*You terrify me, Mr. Lovelace—Let me leave you.*—The man, my dear, looked quite ugly—I never saw a man look so ugly, as passion made him look—*And for what?*—And he so clasped my hands—fierce creature! He so clasped my hands! In short, he seemed by his looks, and by his words (once putting his arms about me), to wish me to provoke him.—So

that

that I had nothing to do, but to beg of him, which I did repeatedly, to permit me to withdraw ; and to promise to meet him at his own time in the morning.

It was with a very ill grace, that he complied, on that condition ; and at parting he kissed my hand with such a savageness, that a redness remains upon it still.

Perfect for me, my dearest Miss Howe, perfect for me, I beseech you, your kind scheme with Mrs. Townsend.—And I will then leave this man. See you not how from step to step he grows upon me ?—I tremble to look back upon his incroachments. And now to give me cause to apprehend more evil from him, than indignation will permit me to express !—O my dear, perfect your scheme, and let me fly from so strange a wretch ! He must certainly have views in quarrelling with me thus, which he dare not own ! Yet what can they be ?

I was so disgusted with, as well as frightened by him that, on my return to my chamber, in a fit of passionate despair, I tore almost in two, the answer I had written to his proposals.

I will see him in the morning, because I promised I would. But I will go out, and that without him, or any attendant. If he account not tolerably for his sudden change of behaviour, and a proper opportunity offer of a private lodging in some credible house, I will not any more return to this :—At present I think so.—And there will I either attend the perfecting of your scheme ; or, by your epistolary mediation, make my own terms with the wretch ; since it is your opinion, that I must be his, and cannot help myself. Or, perhaps take a resolution to throw myself at once into Lady Betty's protection ; and this will hinder him from making his insolently-threatened

threatned visit to Harlowe-Place.

The Lady writes again on Monday evening; and gives her friend an account of all that has passed between her and Mr. Lovelace that day; and of her being terrified out of her purpose of going abroad: But Mr. Lovelace's next letters giving a more ample account of all, hers are omitted.

It is proper, however, to mention, that she urges Miss Howe (from the dissatisfaction she has reason for, from what passed between Mr. Lovelace and herself) to perfect her scheme in relation to Mrs. Townsend.

She concludes this letter in these words.

' I should say something of your last favour (but a few hours ago received), and of your dialogue with your mother.—Are you not very whimsical, my dear?—I have but two things to wish for on this occasion. The one, that your charming pleasantry had a better subject, than that you find for it in this dialogue. The other, that my situation were not such, as must too often damp that pleasantry, and will not permit me to enjoy it, as I used to do. Be, however, happy in yourself, tho' you cannot in

• Your CLARISSA HARLOWE.'

LETTER XXVII.

Mr. LOVELACE To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Monday Morn. May 22.

NO generosity in this lady. None at all. Wouldst thou not have thought, that after I had permitted her to withdraw, primed for mischief as I was, that she would meet me the next morning early; and that with a smile; making me one of her best courtesies?

I was

I was in the dining-room before six, expecting her. She opened not her door. I went up-stairs and down and hemm'd, and called Will. called Dorcas: 'Threw the doors hard too; but still she opened not her door. Thus till half an hour after eight, fooled I away my time; and then, breakfast ready, I sent Dorcas to request her company.

But I was astonished, when, following the wench at the first invitation, I saw her enter dressed, all but her gloves, and those and her fan in her hand; in the same moment, bidding Dorcas direct Will. to get her a chair to the door.

Cruel creature, thought I, to expose me thus to the derision of the woman below.

Going abroad, Madam?

I am, Sir.

I looked cursed silly, I am sure.—You will breakfast first, I hope, Madam, in a very humble strain: Yet with a hundred tenter hooks in my heart.

Had she given me more notice of her intention, I had perhaps wrought myself up to the frame I was in the day before, and begun my vengeance. And immediately came into my head all the virulence that had been transcribed for me from Miss Howe's letters, and in that I had transcribed myself.

Yes, she would drink one dish; and then laid her gloves and fan in the window just by.

I was perfectly disconcerted. I hemm'd and haw'd, and was going to speak several times; but knew not in what key. Who's modest now, thought I! Who's insolent now!—How a tyrant of a woman confounds a bashful man!—She was my Miss Howe, I thought; and I the spiritless Hickman.

At last, I *will* begin, thought I.

She a dish——I a dish.

Sip, her eyes her own, the; like an haughty and imperious

imperious sovereign, conscious of dignity, every look a favour.

Sip, like her vassal, I; lips and hands trembling, and not knowing that I sipp'd or tasted.

I was—I was—I sipp'd—draw'd in my breath and the liquor together, tho' I scalded my mouth with it—I was in hopes, Madam—

Dorcas came in just then.—Dorcas, said she, is a chair gone for?

Damn'd impertinence, thought I, putting me out of my speech! And I was forced to wait for the servant's answer to the insolent mistress's question.

William is gone for one, Madam.

This cost me a minute's silence before I could begin again.—And then it was with my hopes, and my hopes, and my hopes, that I should have been early admitted to—

What weather is it, Dorcas? said she, as regards of me, as if I had not been present.

A little lowering, Madam—The sun is gone in—It was very fine half an hour ago.

I had no patience—Up I rose. Down went the tea-cup, saucer and all.—Confound the weather, the sunshine, and the wench!—Begone for a devil, when I am speaking to your lady, and have so little opportunity given me.

Up rose the lady, half frightened; and snatched from the window her gloves and fan.

You must not go, Madam!—By my soul, you must not—Take her hand.

Must not, Sir!—But I must—You can curse your maid in my absence, as well as if I were present—Except—Except—you intend for *me*, what you direct to *her*.

Dearest creature, you must not go!—You must not leave me!—Such determined scorn! Such contempt!

tempts!—Questions ask'd your servant of no meaning but to break in upon me; who could bear it?

Detain me not, struggling.—I will not be withheld.—I like you not, nor your ways.—You sought to quarrel with me yesterday, for no reason in the world that I can think of, but because I was too obliging. You are an ingrateful man; and I hate you with my whole heart, Mr. Lovelace!

Do not make me desperate, Madam.—Permit me to say, that you shall not leave me in this humour. Where-ever you go, I will attend you.—Had Miss Howe been my friend, I had not been thus treated.—It is but too plain to whom my difficulties are owing. I have long observed, that every letter you receive from her, makes an alteration in your behaviour to me. She would have you treat *me*, as *she* treats Mr. Hickman, I suppose: But neither does that treatment become your admirable temper to offer, nor me to receive.

This startled her. She did not care to have me think hardly of Miss Howe.

But recollecting herself, Miss Howe, said she, is a friend to virtue, and to good men.—If she like not you, it is because you are not one of those.

Yes, Madam; and therefore, to speak of Mr. Hickman and myself, as you both, I suppose, think of each, she treats *him* as she would not treat a *Lovelace*.—I challenge you, Madam, to show me but one of the many letters you have received from her, where I am mentioned.

Whither will this lead us? replied she. Miss Howe is just; Miss Howe is good.—She writes, she speaks, of every-body as they deserve. If you point me out but any one occasion, upon which you have reason to build a merit to yourself, as either just or good, or even generous, I will look out for her letter on that

occasion (if it be but one I have acquainted her with); and will engage it shall be in your favour.

Devilish severe! And as indelicate as severe, to put a modest man upon hunting backward after his own merits.

She would have flung from me: I *will* go out, Mr. Lovelace. I will *not* be detained.

Indeed you must not, Madam, in this humour. And I placed myself between her and the door—And then she threw herself into a chair, fanning herself, her sweet face all crimsoned over with passion.

I cast myself at her feet,—Begone Mr. Lovelace, said she, with a rejecting motion, her fan in her hand; for your own sake leave me!—My soul is above thee, man! With both her hands pushing me from her!—Urge me not to tell thee, how sincerely I think my soul above thee!—Thou hast a proud, a too proud heart, to contend with!—Leave me, and leave me for ever!—Thou hast a proud heart to contend with!

Her air, her manner, her voice, were bewitchingly noble, tho' her words were so severe.

Let me worship an angel, said I, no woman. Forgive me, dearest creature!—Creature if you be, forgive me!—Forgive my inadvertencies! Forgive my inequalities!—Pity my infirmity!—Who is equal to my Clarissa?

I trembled between admiration and love; and wrapt my arms about her knees, as she sat. She try'd to rise at the moment; but my clasping round her thus ardently, drew her down again: and never was woman more affrighted. But free as my clasping emotion might appear to her apprehensive heart, I had not, at the instant, any thought but what reverence inspired. And till she had actually withdrawn (which I permitted under promise of a speedy return, and on her consent to dismiss the chair), all the motions of my heart were as pure as her own.

She

She kept not her word. An hour I waited, before I sent to claim her promise. She could not possibly see me yet, was the answer. As soon as she could, she would.

Dorcas says, she still excessively trembled; and ordered her to give her water and hartshorn.

A strange apprehensive creature!—Her terror is too great for the occasion.—Evils in apprehension are often greater than evils in reality. Hast thou never observed, that the terrors of a bird caught, and actually in the hand, bear no comparison to what we might have supposed those terrors would be, were we to have formed a judgment of the same bird by its shyness before taken?

Dear creature!—Did she never romp? Did she never, from girlhood to now, hoyden? The innocent kinds of freedom taken and allowed on these occasions, would have familiarized her to greater. Sacrilege but to touch the hem of her garment!—Excess of delicacy!—O the consecrated beauty!—How can she think to be a wife!

But how do I know till I try, whether she may not by a less alarming treatment be prevailed upon, or whether [Day, I have done with thee!] she may not yield to nightly surprizes? This is still the burden of my song, I can marry her when I will. And if I do after prevailing (whether by surprize or reluctant consent) whom but myself shall I have injured?

It is now eleven o'clock. She will see me as soon as she can, she tells Polly Horton, who made her a tender visit, and to whom she is less reserved than to any-body else. Her emotion, she assured her, was not owing to perverseness, to nicety, to ill-humour; but to *weakness of heart*. She has not *strength of mind* sufficient, she says, to enable her to support her condition, and her apprehensions, under the weight

of a father's curse ; which she fears is more than beginning to operate.

Yet what a contradiction ! — *Weakness of heart*, says she, with such a *strength of will* ! — O Belford ! she is a lion-hearted lady, in every case where her honour, her punctilio rather, calls for spirit. But I have had reason more than once in her case, to conclude that the passions of the gentlest, slower to be moved than those of the quick, are the most flaming, the most irresistible, when raised. — Yet her charming body is not equally organized. The unequal partners pull two ways ; and the divinity within her tears her silken frame. But had the same soul informed a masculine body, never would there have been a truer hero.

Monday, two o'clock.

My beloved not yet visible. She is not well. What *expectations* had she from my ardent admiration of her ! — More rudeness than revenge apprehended. Yet, how my soul thirsts for revenge upon both these ladies ! — I must have recourse to my master-strokes. This cursed project of Miss Howe and her Mrs. Townsend, if I cannot contrive to render it abortive, will be always a sword hanging over my head. Upon every little disobligation my beloved will be for taking wing ; and the pains I have taken, to deprive her of every other refuge or protection, in order to make her absolutely dependent upon me, will be all thrown away. But, perhaps, I shall find out a Smuggler to counteract Miss Howe.

Thou remembrest the contention between the Sun and the North wind, in the fable ; which should first make an honest Traveller throw off his cloak.

Boreas began first. He puffed away most vehemently ; and often made the poor fellow curve and stagger : But with no other effect, than to cause him to wrap his furtout the closer about him.

But

But when it came to Phœbus's turn, he so played upon the traveller with his beams, that he made him first unbutton, and then throw it quite off:—Nor left he, till he obliged him to take the friendly shade of a spreading beech; where prostrating himself on the thrown-off cloak, he took a comfortable nap.

The victor-god then laughed outright, both at Boreas and the Traveller, and pursued his radiant course shining upon, and warming and cherishing a thousand new objects, as he danced along: And at night, when he put his fiery coursers, he diverted his Thetis with the relation of his pranks in the passed day.

I, in like manner, will discard all my boisterous inventions; and if I can oblige my sweet Traveller to throw aside, but for one moment, the cloak of her rigid virtue, I shall have nothing to do, but, like the Sun, to bless new objects with my rays.—But my chosen hours of conversation and repose, after all my peregrinations, will be devoted to my goddess.

AND now, Belford, according to my new system, I think this house of Mrs. Fretchville an embarrass upon me. I will get rid of it; for some time at least. Mennel, when I am out, will come to her, inquiring for me. What for? thou'l ask. What for!—Hast thou not heard what has befallen poor Mrs. Fretchville?—Then i'll tell thee.

One of her maids, about a week ago, was taken with the small-pox. The rest kept their mistress ignorant of it till Friday; and *then* she came to know it by accident.—The greater half of the plagues poor mortals of condition are tormented with, proceed from the servants they take, partly for shew, partly for use, and with a view to lessen their cares.

This has so terrified the widow, that she is taken with all the symptoms which threaten an attack from that dreadful enemy of fair faces.—So must not think of

of removing : Yet cannot expect, that we should be further delayed on her account.

She now wishes, with all her heart, that she had known her own mind, and gone into the country at first when I treated about the house : This evil then had not happened !—A cursed cross accident for *us*, too !—High-ho ! Nothing else, I think, in this mortal life ! People need not study to bring crosses upon themselves by their petulances.

So this affair of the house will be over ; at least, for one while. But then I can fall upon an expedient which will make amends for this disappointment. Since I must move *slow*, in order to be *sure*, I have a charming contrivance or two in my head—Even supposing she should get away, to bring her back again.

But what is become of Lord M. I trow, that he writes not to me, in answer to my invitation ? If he would send me such a letter, as I could shew, it might go a great way towards a perfect reconciliation. I have written to Charlotte about it. He shall soon hear from me, and that in a way he won't like, if he writes not quickly. He has sometimes threatened to disinherit *me* : But if I should renounce *him*, it would be but justice, and would vex him ten times more, than any thing he can do, will vex me. Then, the settlements unavoidably delayed, by his neglect ?—How shall I bear such a life of procrastination ! I, who, as to my will, and impatience, and so forth, am of the true *lady-make* ! and can as little bear controul and disappointment as the best of them !

ANOTHER letter from Miss Howe. I suppose it is *that* which she promises in her last to send her, relating to the courtship between old Tony the uncle, and Annabella the mother. I should be extremely rejoiced to see it. No more of the smuggler-plot in it, I hope. This, it seems, she has put in her Pocket.

Pocket. But I hope I shall soon find it deposited with the rest.

Monday evening.

AT my repeated request she condescended to meet me in the dining-room to afternoon tea, and not before.

She entered with bashfulness, as I thought; in a pretty confusion, for having carried her apprehensions too far. Sullen and slow moved she towards the tea-table.—Dorcas present, busy in tea-cup preparations. I took her reluctant hand, and pressed it to my lips.—Dearest, loveliest of creatures, why this distance? Why this displeasure?—How can you thus torture the faithfulest heart in the world? She disengaged her hand. Again I would have snatch'd it.

Be quiet, peevishly withdrawing it; and down she sat; a gentle palpitation in the beauty of beauties indicating mingled fullness and resentment; her snowy handkerchief rising and falling, and a sweet flush overspreading her charming cheeks.

For God's sake, Madam!—And a third time I would have taken her repulsing hand.

And for the same sake, Sir; no more teasing.

Dorcas retired; I drew my chair nearer her's, and with the most respectful tenderness took her hand; and told her, that I could not, without the utmost concern, forbear to express my apprehensions (from the distance she was so desirous to keep me at), that if any man in the world was more *indifferent* to her, to use no harsher a word, than another, it was the unhappy wretch before her.

She looked steadily upon me for a moment, and with her other hand, not withdrawing that I held, pulled her handkerchief out of her pocket; and by a twinkling motion, tried to dissipate a tear or two, which stood ready in each eye, to meander themselves

a passage

a passage down her glowing cheeks ; but answered me only with a sigh, and an averted face.

I urged her to speak ; to look up at me ; to bless me with an eye more favourable,

I had reason, she told me, for my complaint of her indifference. She saw nothing in my mind that was generous. I was not a man to be obliged or favoured. My strange behaviour to her since Saturday night, for no cause at all that she knew of, convinced her of this. Whatever hopes she had conceived of me, were utterly dissipated : All my ways were disgusting to her.

This cut me to the heart. The guilty, I believe, in every case, less patiently bear the detecting truth, than the innocent do the degrading falsehood.

I bespake her patience, while I took the liberty to account for this change on my part.—I re-acknowledged the pride of my heart, which could not bear the thought of that want of preference in the heart of a lady, whom I hoped to call mine, which she had always manifested. Marriage, I said, was a state that was not to be entered upon with indifference on either side.

It is insolence, interrupted she, it is presumption, Sir, to expect tokens of value, without resolving to deserve them. You have no whining creature before you, Mr. Lovelace, overcome by weak motives, to love where there is no merit. Miss Howe can tell you, Sir, that I never loved the *faults* of my friend ; nor ever wished her to love me for mine. It was a rule with us, not to spare each other. And would a man who has nothing but faults (for pray, Sir, what are your virtues ?) expect that I should shew a value for him ? Indeed, if I did, I should not deserve even his value, but ought to be despised by him.

Well have you, Madam, kept up to this noble manner of thinking. You are in no danger of being despised

despised for any marks of tenderness or favour shewn to the man before you. You have been perhaps, *you'll* think, *laudably* studious of making and taking occasions to declare, that it was far from being owing to your choice, that you had any thoughts of me. My whole soul, Madam, in all its errors, in all its wishes, in all its views, had been laid open and naked before you; had I been encouraged by such a share in your confidence and esteem, as would have secured me against your apprehended worst constructions of what I should from time to time have revealed to you, and consulted you upon. For never was there a franker heart; nor a man so ready to accuse himself. [This, Belford, is true.] But you know, Madam, how much otherwise it has been between us.—Doubt, distance, reserve, on your part, begat doubt, fear, awe, on mine.—How little confidence! as if we apprehended each other to be a plotter rather than a lover. How have I dreaded every letter that has been brought you from Wilson's! —And with reason; since the last, from which I expected so much, on account of the proposals I had made you in writing, has, if I may judge by the effects, and by your denial of seeing me yesterday (tho' you could go abroad, and in a *chair* too, to avoid my attendance on you), set you against me more than ever.

I was guilty, it seems, of going to church, said the indignant charmer; and without the company of a man, whose choice it would not have been to go, had I not gone. I was guilty of desiring to have the whole Sunday to myself, after I had obliged you against my will, at a play, and after you had detained me, equally to my dislike, to a very late hour over night.—These were my faults: For these I was to be punished; I was to be compelled to see you, and to be terrified when I did see you, by the most shocking

ing ill-humour that was ever shewn to a creature in my circumstances, and not bound to bear it. You have pretended to find free fault with my father's temper, Mr. Lovelace: But the worst that he ever shewed *after* marriage, was not in the least to be compared to what you have shewn twenty times *beforehand*.—And what are my prospects with you, at the very best? My indignation rises against you, Mr. Lovelace, while I speak to you, when I recollect the many instances, equally ungenerous and unpolite, of your behaviour to one whom you have brought into distress.—And I can hardly bear you in my sight.

She turned from me, standing up; and lifting up her folded hands and charming eyes, swimming in tears—O my dear papa, said the imitable creature, you might have spared your heavy purse, had you known how I have been punished ever since my swerving feet led me out of your garden-doors to meet this man! Then, sinking into her chair, a burst of passionate tears forced their way down her glowing cheeks.

My dearest life, taking her still folded hands in mine, who can bear an invocation so affecting, tho' so passionate? [And, as I hope to live, my nose tingled, as I once when a boy remember it did (and indeed once more very lately), just before some tears came into my eyes; and I durst hardly trust my face in view of hers] What have I done to deserve this impatient exclamation?—Have I, at any time, by word, by deeds, by looks, given you cause to doubt my honour, my reverence, my *adoration*, I may call it, of your virtues?—All is owing to misapprehension, I hope, on both sides.—Condescend to clear up but your part, as I will mine, and all must speedily be happy.—Would to heaven I loved that heaven as I love you! And yet, if I doubted a return in love,

let

let me perish if I should know how to wish you mine! — Give me hope, dearest creature, give me but hope, that I am your preferable choice! — Give me but hope that you hate me not; that you do not despise me.

O Mr. Lovelace, we have been long enough together, to be tired of each other's humours and ways; ways and humours so different, that perhaps you ought to dislike *me*, as much as I do *you*. — I think, I think, that I cannot make an answerable return to the value you profess for me. My temper is utterly ruined. You have given me an ill opinion of all mankind; of yourself in particular: And withal so bad a one of myself, that I shall never be able to look up, having utterly and for ever lost all that self-complacency, and conscious pride, which are so necessary to carry a woman through this life with tolerable satisfaction to herself.

She paused. I was silent. By my soul, thought I, this sweet creature will at last undo me!

She proceeded. — What now remains, but that you pronounce me free of all obligation to you? And that you will not hinder me from pursuing the destiny that shall be allotted me?

Again she paused. I was still silent: meditating whether to renounce all further designs upon her; whether I had not received sufficient evidence of a virtue, and of a greatness of soul, that could not be questioned, or impeached.

She went on: Propitious to me be your silence, Mr. Lovelace! — Tell me, that I am free of all obligation to you. You know, I never made *you* promises. — You know, that you are not under any to *me*. — My broken fortunes I matter not. —

She was proceeding. — My dearest life, said I, I have been all this time, tho' you fill me with doubts

of

of your favour, busy in the nuptial preparations.—I am actually in treaty for equipage.

Equipage, Sir!—Trappings, Tinsel!—What is Equipage; what is Life; what is Any-thing, to a creature sunk so low, as I am in my own opinion!—Labouring under a father's curse!—Unable to look backward without reproach, or forward without terror!—These reflections strengthen'd by every cross accident!—And what but cross accidents befall me!—All my darling schemes dashed in pieces; all my hopes at an end; deny me not the liberty to refuge myself in some obscure corner, where neither the enemies you have made me, nor the few friends you have left me, may ever hear of the supposed rash one, till those happy moments are at hand, which shall ex-piate for all!

I had not a word to say for myself. Such a war in my mind had I never known. Gratitude, and admiration of the excellent creature before me, combatting with villainous habit, with resolutions so premeditately made, and with views so much gloried in!—An hundred new contrivances in my head, and in my heart, that, to be honest, as it is called, must all be given up, by a heart delighting in intrigue and difficulty—Miss Howe's virulences endeavoured to be re-collected—Yet recollection refusing to bring them forward with the requisite efficacy—I had certainly been a lost man, had not Dorcas come seasonably in, with a letter.—On the superscription written—*Be pleased, Sir, to open it now.*

I returned to the window—opened it—It was from herself.—These the contents—‘ Be pleased to detain my lady; a paper of importance to transcribe.—I will cough when I have done.’

I put the paper in my pocket, and turned to my charmer, less disconcerted, as she, by that time, had also a little recovered herself.—One favour, dearest creature—

creature—Let me but know, whether Miss Howe approves or disapproves of my proposals?—I know her to be my enemy. I was intending to account to you for the change of behaviour you accused me of at the beginning of this conversation; but was diverted from it by your vehemence.—Indeed, my beloved creature, you was *very* vehement.—Do you think, it must not be matter of high regret to me, to find my wishes so often delayed and postponed, in favour of your predominant view to a reconciliation with relations, who will not be reconciled to you?—To this was owing your declining to celebrate before we came to town, tho' you were so atrociously treated by your sister, and your whole family; and tho' so ardently pressed to celebrate by me? To this was owing the ready offence you took at my four friends; and at the unavailing attempt I made to see a dropt letter, little imagining that there could be room for mortal displeasure on that account, from what two such ladies could write to each other.—To this was owing the week's distance you held me at, till you knew the issue of another application.—But when they had rejected that; when you had sent my coldly-received proposals to Miss Howe for her approbation or advice, as indeed I advised, and had honoured me with your company at the play on Saturday night (my whole behaviour unobjectionable to the last hour); must not, Madam, the sudden change in your conduct, the very next morning, astonish and distress me?—And this persisted in with still stronger declarations, after you had received the impatiently expected letter from Miss Howe; must I not conclude, that all was owing to her influence; and that some other application or project was meditating, that made it necessary to keep me again at distance till the result were known, and which was to deprive me of you for ever? for was not that your constantly proposed preliminary?—

Well,

Well, Madam, might I be wrought up to a half-frenzy by this apprehension ; and well might I charge you with hating me.—And now, dearest creature, let me know, I once more ask you, what is Miss Howe's opinion of my proposals ?

Were I disposed to debate with you, Mr. Lovelace, I could very easily answer your fine harangue. But at present, I shall only say, that your ways have been very unaccountable. You seem to me, if your meanings were always just, to have taken great pains to embarrass them. Whether owing in you to the want of a clear head, or a sound heart, I cannot determine ; but it is to the want of one of them, I verily think, that I am to ascribe the greatest part of your strange conduct.

Curse upon the heart of the little devil, said I, who instigates you to think so hardly of the faithfulest heart in the world !

How dare you, Sir ?—And there she stopt ; having almost overshot herself ; as I designed she should.

How dare I *what*, Madam, And I looked with meaning. How dare I *what* ?

Vile man !—And do you—And there again she stopt.

Do I *what*, Madam ?—And why *vile man* ?

How dare you to curse *any-body* in my presence ?

O the sweet receder !—But that was not to go off so with a Lovelace.

Why then, dearest creature, is there *any-body* that instigates you ?—If there be, again I curse them, be they who they will.

She was in a charming pretty passion.— And this was the first time that I had the odds in my favour.

Well, Madam, it is just as I thought. And now I know how to account for a temper, that I hope is not *natural* to you.

Artful

Artful wretch! And is it thus you would entrap me?—But know, Sir, that I receive letters from nobody but Miss Howe. Miss Howe likes some of your ways as little as I do; for I have set every-thing before her.—Yet she is thus far *your* enemy, as she is *mine*:—She thinks I should not refuse your offers; but endeavour to make the best of my lot. And now you have the truth. Would to heaven you were capable of dealing with equal sincerity!

I am, Madam. And here, on my knee, I renew my vows, and my supplication, that you will make me yours—Yours for ever.—And let me have cause to bleſs you and Miss Howe in the same breath.

To say the truth, Belford, I had before begun to think, that that vixen of a girl, who certainly likes not Hickman, was in love with *me*.

Rise, Sir, from your too-ready knees; and mock me not.

Too-ready knees, thought I!—Tho' this humble posture so little affects this proud beauty, she knows not how much I have obtained of others of her sex, nor how often I have been forgiven the last attempts, by kneeling.

Mock you, Madam;—And I arose, and re-argued her for the day. I blamed myself at the same time, for my invitation to Lord M. as it might subject me to delay, from his infirmities: But told her that I would write to him to excuse me, if she had no objection; or to give him the day she would give me, and not wait for him, if he could not come in time.

My day, Sir, said she, is never. Be not surprized. A person of politeness judging between us, would not be surprized that I say so. But indeed, Mr. Lovelace, and wept thro' impatience, you either know not how to treat with a mind of the least degree of delicacy, notwithstanding your birth and education, or you are an ingrateful man; and (after a pause) a worse than ingrateful

ingrateful one. But I will retire. I will see you again to-morrow. I cannot before. I think I hate you.—You may look—indeed I think I hate you. And if, upon a re-examination of my own heart, I find I do, I would not for the world that matters should go on farther between us.

I was too much vex'd, disconcerted, mortify'd, to hinder her retiring—And yet she had not gone, if Dorcas had not cough'd.

The wench came in, as soon as her lady had retired and gave me the copy she had taken. And what should it be of, but the answer the truly admirable creature had intended to give to my written proposals in relation to settlements?

I have but just dipt into this affecting paper. Were I to read it attentively, not a wink should I sleep this night. To-morrow it shall obtain my serious consideration.

L E T T E R XXVIII.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Tuesday morning, May 23.

THE dear creature desires to be excused seeing me till evening. She is not very well, Dorcas tells me.

Read here, if thou wilt, the paper transcribed by Dorcas. It is impossible that I should proceed with my projects against this admirable woman, were it not that I am resolved, after a few trials more, as nobly sustained as those she has already passed through to make her (if she really hate me not) legally mine.

To Mr. LOVELACE.

‘ WHEN a woman is married, that supreme earthly obligation requires her, in all instances of natural justice, and where her husband’s honour may

may be concerned, to yield her own will to his—
But, beforehand, I could be glad, conformably to
what I have always signified, to have the most ex-
plicit assurances, that every possible way should be
tried to avoid litigation with my father. Time and
patience will subdue all things. My prospects of
happiness are extremely contracted. A husband's
right will be always the same. In my life-time I
could wish nothing to be done of this sort. Your
circumstances, Sir, will not oblige you to extort
violently from him what is in his hands. All that
depends upon *me*, either with regard to my person,
to my diversions, or to the oeconomy that no mar-
ried woman, of whatever rank or quality, should be
above inspecting, shall be done, to prevent a neces-
sity for such measures being taken. And, if there
will be no *necessity* for them, it is to be hoped, that
motives *less excusable* will not have force—Motives
which must be founded in a littleness of mind, which
a woman, who has *not* that littleness of mind, will
be under such temptations as her duty will hardly be
able at all times to check, to despise her husband
for having, especially in cases where her own fami-
ly, so much a part of herself, and which will have
obligations upon her (tho' then but *secondary* ones)
from which she never can be freed, are intimately
concerned.'

' This article, then, I urged to your most serious
consideration, as what lies next my heart. I enter
not here minutely into the fatal misunderstanding
between them and you: The fault may be in both.
But, Sir, *yours* was the foundation fault: At least,
you gave a too plausible pretence for my brother's
antipathy to work upon. Condescension was no
part of your study. You chose to bear the impu-
tations laid to your charge, rather than to make it
your endeavour to obviate them.'

‘ But this may lead into hateful recrimination—
 ‘ Let it be remembered, I will only say, in this place,
 ‘ that, in *their* eye, you have robbed them of a daugh-
 ‘ ter they doted upon; and that their resentments on
 ‘ this occasion rise but in proportion to their love,
 ‘ and their disappointment. If they were faulty in
 ‘ some of the measures they took, while they them-
 ‘ selves did not think so, who shall judge for *them*?
 ‘ You, Sir, who will judge every-body as you please,
 ‘ and will let no-body judge you, in *your own* parti-
 ‘ cular, must not be their judge.—It may therefore
 ‘ be expected that they will stand out.’

‘ As for *myself*, Sir, I must leave it (so seems it to
 ‘ be distined) to your justice, to treat me as you shall
 ‘ think I deserve: But if your future behaviour to
 ‘ *them* is not governed by that harsh-sounding impla-
 ‘ cableness, which you charge upon some of their
 ‘ tempers, the splendor of your family, and the ex-
 ‘ cellent character of *some* of them (of *all* indeed, ex-
 ‘ cept your own conscience furnishes you with one
 ‘ *only* exception) will, on better consideration, do
 ‘ every thing with them: For they *may* be overcome;
 ‘ perhaps, however, with the more difficulty, as the
 ‘ greatly prosperous less bear controul, and disappoin-
 ‘ ment than others: For I will own to you, that I
 ‘ have often in secret lamented, that their great ac-
 ‘ quirments have been a snare to them; perhaps as
 ‘ great a snare, as some other accidentals have been to
 ‘ you; which being less immediately your own gifts,
 ‘ you have still less reason than they to value your-
 ‘ self upon them.’

‘ Let me only, on this subject, further observe,
 ‘ that condescension is not meanness. There is a
 ‘ glory in yielding, that hardly any violent spirit can
 ‘ judge of. My brother perhaps is no more sensible of
 ‘ *this* than you. But as you have talents he has not
 ‘ (who, however, has, as I hope, that regard for

‘ *morals*,

morals, the want of which makes one of his objections to you), I could wish it may not be owing to you, that your mutual dislikes to each other do not subside; for it is my earnest hope, that in time you may see each other, without exciting the fears of a wife and a sister for the consequence. Not that I should wish you to yield in points that truly concerned your honour: No, Sir, I would be as delicate in such, as you yourself: *More* delicate, I will venture to say, because more uniformly so. How vain, how contemptible, is that pride, which shews itself in standing upon diminutive observances; and gives up and makes a jest of, the most important!

This article being considered as I wish, all the rest will be easy. Were I to accept of the handsome separate provision you seem to intend me; added to the considerable sums arisen from my grandfather's estate since his death (more considerable, than perhaps you may suppose from your offer); I should think it my duty to lay up for the family good, and for unforeseen events out of it: For, as to my donations, I would generally confine myself, in them, to the tenth of my income, be what it would. I aim at no glare at what I do of that sort: All I wish for, is the power of relieving the lame, the blind, the sick, and the industrious poor, whom accident has made so, or sudden distress reduced. The common or bred beggars I leave to others, and to the public provision. They cannot be lower: Perhaps they will not to be higher: And, not able to do for every one, I aim not at works of supererogation. Two hundred pounds a year would do all I wish to do of the separate sort: For all above, I would content myself to ask you; except mistrusting your own economy, you would give up to my management and keeping, in order to provide for future

‘ contingencies, a larger portion ; for which, as your steward, I would regularly account.’

‘ As to cloaths, I have particularly two suits, which have been only, in a manner, try’d on, would answer for any present occasion. Jewels I have of my grandmother’s, which want only new-setting: Another Set I have, which on particular days I used to wear. Altho’ these are not sent me, I have no doubt, being merely personals, that they will, when I send for them in another name: Till when I should not choose to wear any.’

‘ As to your complaints of my diffidences, and the like, I appeal to your own heart, if it be possible for you to make my case your own for one moment, and to retrospect some parts of your behaviour, words, and actions, whether I am not rather to be justified than censured—and whether, of all men in the world, avowing what you avow, you ought not to think so. If you do not, let me admonish you, Sir, that there must be too great a mismatch, as I may call it, in our minds, ever to make you wish to bring about a more intimate union of interests between yourself and

‘ May 20.

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

THE original of this charming paper, as Dorcas tells me, was torn almost in two :—In one of her pets I suppose !—What business have the Sex, whose principal glory is meekness, and patience, and resignation, to be in a passion, I trow ?—Will not she who allows herself such liberties as a maiden lady, take greater when a married one ?

And a *wife*, to be in a passion !—Let me tell the ladies, it is a d—n’d impudent thing, begging their pardon, and as *imprudent* as impudent, for a *wife* to be in a passion, if she mean not eternal separation, or wicked defiance, by it : For is it not rejecting at once

all

all that expostulatory meekness, and gentle reasoning, mingled with sighs as gentle, and graced with bent knees, supplicating hands, and eyes lifted up to your imperial countenance, just running over, that should make a reconciliation speedy, and as lasting as speedy? Even suppose the husband is wrong, will not his being so, give the greater force to her expostulation?

Now I think of it, a man *should* be wrong now-and-then, to make his wife shine. Miss Howe tells my charmer, that adversity is *her* shining-time. 'Tis a generous thing in a man, to make his wife shine at his own expence: To give her leave to triumph over him by patient reasoning: For were he to be too *imperial* to acknowledge his fault on the spot, she will find the benefit of *her* duty and submission *in future*, and in the high opinion he will conceive of her prudence and obligingness—And so, by degrees, she will be her master's master.

But for a wife to come up with a kemboed arm, the other hand thrown out, perhaps, with a pointing finger—Look ye here, Sir!—Take notice!—If *you* are wrong, *I'll* be wrong!—If *you* are in a passion, *I'll* be in a passion!—Rebuff, for rebuff, Sir!—If *you* fly, *I'll* tear!—If *you* swear, *I'll* curse!—And the same room, and the same bed, shall not hold us, Sir!—For, remember, I am marry'd, Sir!—I'm a wife, Sir!—You can't help yourself, Sir!—Your honour as well as your peace, is in my keeping!—And, if you like not this treatment, you may have worse, Sir!

Ah! Jack, Jack! What man that has observed these things, either *imply'd*, or *express'd*, in other families, would wish to be an husband!

Dorcas found this paper in one of the drawers of her lady's dressing-table: She was re-perusing of it, as she supposes, when the honest wench carried my message to desire her to favour me at the tea-table; for

she saw her pop a paper into the drawer, as she came in ; and there, on her mistress's going to meet me in the dining-room, she found it : And to be This.

But I had better not to have a copy of it, as far as I know : For, determined as I was before upon my operations, it instantly turned all my resolutions in her favour. Yet I would give something to be convinced, that she did not pop it into her drawer before the wench, in order for me to see it ; and perhaps (if I were to take notice of it) to discover whether Dorcas, according to Miss Howe's advice, were most *my friend or hers.*

The very suspicion of this will do her no good : For I cannot bear to be artfully treated. People love to enjoy their own peculiar talents in *monopoly*, as I may say. I am aware, that it will strengthen thy arguments against me in her behalf. But I know every tittle thou canst say upon it : So spare thy wambling nonsense, I desire thee ; and leave this sweet excellence and me to our fate : That will determine for us, as it shall please itself : For, as Cowley says,

*An unseen hand makes all our moves :
And some are great, and some are small ;
Some climb to good, some from good fortune fall :
Some wise men, and some fools we call :
Figures, alas ! of speech ! — For destiny plays us all.*

But, after all, I am sorry, *almost* sorry (for how shall I do to be *quite* sorry, when it is not given to me to be so ?), that I cannot, without making any further trials, resolve upon wedlock.

I have just read over again this intended answer to my proposals : And how I adore her for it !

But yet ; another *Yet !* — She has not given it or sent it to me. — So it is not *her* answer. It is not written *for* me, tho' *to* me.

Nay,

Nay, she has not intended to send it to me: She has even torn it, perhaps with indignation, as thinking it too *good* for me. By this action she absolutely retracts it. Why then does my foolish fondness seek to establish for her the same merit in my heart, as if she avowed it? Prythee, dear Belford, once more leave us to our fate; and do not thou interpose with thy nonsense, to weaken a spirit already too squeamish and strengthen a conscience that has declared itself of her party.

Then again remember thy recent discoveries, Lovelace!—Remember her indifference, attended with all the appearance of contempt and hatred. View her, even *now*, wrapt up in reserve and mystery; meditating plots, as far as thou knowest, against the sovereignty thou hast, by right of conquest, obtained over her: Remember, in short, all thou hast threatened to remember against this insolent beauty, who is a rebel to the power she has listed under!

But yet, how dost thou propose to subdue thy sweet enemy?—Abhor'd be *force*, be the *necessity* of force, if that can be avoided!—There is no triumph in *force*! No conquest over the will!—No prevailing, by gentle degrees, over the gentle passions! *Force* is the devil!

My cursed character, as I have often said, was against me at setting out!—Yet is she not a *woman*? Cannot I find one but half-yielding moment, if she do not absolutely hate me?

But with what can I tempt her?—**RICHES** she was born to, and despises, knowing what they are. **JEWELS** and ornaments, to a mind so much a jewel, and so richly set, her worthy consciousness will not let her value. **LOVE**, if she be susceptible of love, it seems to be so much under the direction of prudence, that one unguarded moment, I fear, cannot be reasonably hoped for: And so much **VIGILANCE**,

so much Apprehensiveness, that her fears are ever beforehand with her dangers. Then her LOVE of VIRTUE seems to be principle, native, or, if not native, so deeply rooted, that its fibres have struck into her heart, and, as she grew up, so blended and twisted themselves with the strings of life, that I doubt there is no separating of the one without cutting the others asunder.

What then can be done to make such a matchless creature as this get over the first tests in order to put her to the grand proof, whether once overcome, she will not be always overcome?

By my faith, Jack, as I sit gazing upon her, my whole soul in my eyes, contemplating her perfections and thinking, when I have seen her easy and serene, what would be her thoughts, did she know my heart as well as I know it; when I behold her her disturbed and jealous, how *just* her apprehensions, and that she cannot fear so much as there is room for her to fear; my heart often misgives me.

And must, think I, O creature so divinely excellent, and so beloved of my soul, those arms, those incircling arms, that would make a monarch happy, be used to repel brutal force; all their strength, unavailingly perhaps, exerted to repel it, and to defend a person so delicately framed? Can violence enter into the heart of a wretch, who might intitle himself to all thy willing, yet virtuous love, and make the blessings thou aspirest after, her *duty* to confer?— Begone, villain-purposes!—Sink ye all to the hell that could only inspire ye!—And I am ready to throw myself at her feet, confess my villainous designs, avow my repentance, and put it out of my power to act unworthily by such a peerless excellence.

How then comes it, that all these compassionate, and, as some would call them, honest sensibilities go off?—Why, Miss Howe will tell thee: She says I

am

am the *devil*.—By my conscience, I think he has, at present, a great share in me.

There's ingenuity!—How I lay myself open to thee!—But seest thou not, that the more I say against myself, the less room there is for thee to take me to task?—O Belford, Belford! I cannot, cannot, (at least at present I cannot) marry.

Then her family, my bitter enemies!—To supple to them, or, If I do not, to make her *as unhappy*, as she can be from my *attempts*—

Then must she love Them too much, Me too little.

She now seems to despise me, Miss Howe declares, that she really does despise me: To be *despised by a Wife*!—What a thought is that!—To be *excelled by a Wife* too, in every part of praise-worthy knowledge!—To *take lessons*, to *take instructions*, from a Wife!—More than despise me, she herself has taken time to consider whether she does not hate me:—*I hate you, Lovelace, with my whole heart*, said she to me but yesterday!—*My soul is above thee, man!*—Urge me not to tell thee, how sincerely I think my soul above thee!—How poor indeed was I then, even in my own heart!—So *visible* a superiority, to so proud a spirit as mine!—And here from Below, from *Below* indeed! I am so goaded on—

Yet 'tis poor too think myself a machine.—I am no machine.—Lovelace, thou art base to thyself, but to suppose thyself a machine.

But having gone thus far, I should be unhappy, if, after marriage, in the petulance of ill humour, I had it to reproach myself, that I did not try her to the utmost. And yet I don't know how it is, but this lady, the moment I come into her presence, half assimilates me to her own virtue.—Once or twice (to say nothing of her triumph over me on Sunday night) I was prevailed upon to fluster myself, with an intention to make some advances, which if obliged to

recede

recede, I might lay upon raised spirits: But the instant I beheld her, I was soberized into awe and reverence: And the majesty of her even *visible* purity first damped, and then extinguished, my *double* flame.

What a surprisingly powerful effect, so much and so long in my power, *she*! so instigated by some of her own sex, and so stimulated by passion, *I*!—How can this be accounted for, in a Lovelace!

But what a heap of stuff have I written!—How have I been run away with!—By what?—Canst thou say, by what?—O thou lurking varletess CONSCIENCE!—Is it Thou, that hast thus made me of party against myself?—How camest thou in?—In what disguise thou egregious haunter of my more agreeable hours?—Stand thou, with *fate*, but neuter in this controversy; and, if I cannot do credit to human nature, and to the female sex, by bringing down such an angel as this to class with and adorn it (for adorn it she does in her very foibles), then I am all yours, and never will resist you more.

Here I arose. I shook myself. The window was open. Away the troublesome bosom-visiter, the intruder, is flown.—I see it yet!—I see it yet!—And now it lessens to my aching eye!—And now the cleft air has closed after it, and it is out of sight!—And once more I am

R. LOVELACE.

LETTER XXIX.

MR. LOVELACE TO JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Tuesday, May 23.

WELL did I, and but just in time, conclude to have done with Mrs. Fetchville and the house: For her Mennell has declar'd that he cannot in conscience and honour go any farther.—He would not for the world

world be necessary to the deceiving of such a Lady ! — I was a fool to let either you or him see her ; for ever since ye have both had scruples, which neither would have had, were a woman to have been in the question.

Well, I can't help it !

He has, however, tho' with some reluctance, consented to write me a letter, provided I will allow it to be the last step he shall take in this affair.

I presumed, I told him, that if I could make Mrs. Fretchville's *woman* supply his place, he would have no objection to that.

None, he says,—*But is it not pity*—

A pitiful fellow ! Such a ridiculous kind of pity *his*, as those silly souls have, who would not kill an innocent chicken for the world ; but when killed to their hands are always the most greedy devourers of it.

Now this letter gives the servant the small-pox : And she has given it to her unhappy vapourish lady. Vapourish people are perpetual subjects for diseases to work upon. *Name* but the malady, and it is theirs in a moment. *Ever* fitted for inoculation.—The physical tribe's milch-cows. A vapourish or splenetic patient is a fiddle for the doctor ; and they are eternally playing upon it. Sweet music does it make them. All their difficulty, except a *cafe* extraordinary happens (as poor Mrs. Fretchville's, who has *realized* her apprehensions), is but to hold their countenance, while their patient is drawing up a bill of indictment against himself ;—and when they have heard it, proceed to *punish* :—The right word for *preferbe*. Why should they not, when the criminal has confessed his guilt ?—And *punish* they generally do with a vengeance.

Yet, silly toads too, now I think of it ! For why, when they know they cannot do good, may they not

as well endeavour to gratify, as to nauseate, the patient's palate?

Were I a physician, I'd get all the trade to myself: For Malmsey, and Cyprus, and the generous products of the Cape, a little disguised, should be my principal doses: As these would create new spirits, how would the revived patient covet the physic, and adore the doctor!

Give all the paraders of the faculty whom thou knowest, this hint.—There could but one inconvenience arise from it. The APOTHECARIES would find their medicines cost them *something*: But the demand for quantities would answer that: Since the honest NURSE would be the patient's taster; perpetually requiring repetitions of the last cordial julap.

Well, but to the letter—Yet what need of further explanation after the hints in my former? The widow cannot be removed; and that's enough: And Mennell's work is over; and his conscience left to plague him for his own sins, and not another man's: And, very possibly, plague enough will it give him for those.

This letter is directed, *To Robert Lovelace, Esq; or, in his absence, To his Lady.* She had refused dining with me, or seeing me; and I was out when it came. She open'd it: So is my lady by her own consent, proud and saucy as she is.

I am glad at my heart that it came before we entirely make up. She would else, perhaps, have concluded it to be contrived for a delay: And now, moreover we can accommodate our old and new quarrels together; and that's contrivance you know. But how is her dear haughty heart humbled to what it was when I knew her first, that she can apprehend any delays from me; and have nothing to do but to vex at them!

I came in to dinner. She sent me down the letter,

ter, desiring my excuse for opening it. Did it before she was aware. Lady-Pride, Belford!—Recollection, then, Retrogradation!

I requested to see her upon it that moment. But she desires to suspend our interview till morning. I will bring her to own, before I have done with her, that she can't see me too often.

My impatience was so great, on an occasion so *unexpected*, that I could not help writing, to tell her, ‘ how much vex'd I was at the accident: But that it need not delay my happy day, as That did not depend upon the house [She knew That before, she'll think, and so did I] : And as Mrs. Fretchville, by Mr. Mennel, so handsomely expreffed her concern upon it, and her wishes, that it could suit us to bear with the unavoidable delay, I hoped, that going down to The Lawn for two or three of the summer-months, when I was made the happiest of men, would be favourable to all round.’

The dear creature takes this incident to heart, I believe : And sends word to my repeated request to see her, notwithstanding her denial, that she cannot till the morning : It shall be then at six o'clock, if I please !

To be sure I *do* please !

Can see her but once a day now, Jack !

Did I tell thee, that I wrote a letter to my cousin Montague, wondering that I heard not from Lord M. as the subject was so very interesting ? In it I acquainted her with the house I was about taking ; and with Mrs. Fretchville's vapourish delays.

I was very loth to engage my own family, either man or woman, in this affair ; but I must take my measures securely : And already they all think as bad of me as they well can. You observe by my Lord M's to yourself, that the well-manner'd Peer is afraid

I should

I should play this admirable creature one of my usual dogs-tricks.

I have received just now an answer from Charlotte.

Charlotte i'n't well. A stomach-disorder.

No wonder a girl's stomach should plague her. A single lady ; that's it. When she has a man to plague, it will have something besides itself to prey upon. Knowest thou not moreover, that man is the woman's Sun ; woman is the man's Earth ?—How dreary, how desolate, the Earth, that is deprived of the all-salubriating Sun-shine !

Poor Charlotte ! But I *heard* she was not well: That encouraged me to write to her ; and to express myself a little concerned, that she had not of her own accord thought of a visit in town to my charmer.

Here follows a copy of a letter : Thou wilt see by it, that every little monkey is to cathechise me. They all depend upon my good-nature.

Dear Cousin,

M. Hall, May 22.

WE have been in daily hope for a long time, I must call it, of hearing that the happy knot was ty'd. My Lord has been very much out of order : And yet nothing would serve him, but he would himself write an answer to your letter. It was the only opportunity he should ever have, perhaps, to throw in a little good advice to you, with the hope of its being of any signification ; and he has been several hours in a day, as his gout would let him, busied in it : It wants now only his last revisal. He hopes it will have the greater weight with you, if it appear all in his own hand-writing.

Indeed, Mr. Lovelace, his worthy heart is wrapt up in you. I wish you loved yourself but half as well.

well. But I believe too, that if all the family loved you less, you would love yourself more.

His Lordship has been very busy, at the times he could not write, in consulting Pritchard about those estates, which he proposes to transfer to you on the happy occasion, that he may answer your letter in the most acceptable manner; and shew by effects, how kindly he takes your invitation. I assure you, he is mighty proud of it.

As for myself, I am not at all well, and have not been for some weeks past, with my old stomach-disorder. I had certainly else before now have done myself the honour you wonder I have *not* done myself. My aunt Laurence, who would have accompanied me (for we had laid it all out), has been exceedingly busy in her law-affair; her antagonist, who is actually on the spot, having been making proposals for an accommodation. But you may assure yourself, that when our dear relation-elect shall be enter'd upon the new habitation you tell me of, we will do ourselves the honour of visiting her; and if any delay arises from the dear lady's want of courage, which, considering her man, let me tell you, may very well be, we will endeavour to inspire her with it, and be sponsors for you;—for, cousin, I believe you have need to be christen'd over again before you are intitled to so great a blessing. What think you?

Just now, my Lord tells me, he will dispatch a man on purpose with his letter to-morrow: So I need not have written. But now I have; let it go; and by Empson, who sets out directly on his return to town.

My best compliments, and sister's, to the most deserving lady in the world (You will need no other direction to the person meant), conclude me

Your affectionate Cousin and servant,
CHARL. MONTAGUE.
THOU

THOU seest how seasonably this letter comes. I hope my Lord will write nothing but what I may shew my beloved. I have actually sent her up this letter of Charlotte's and hope for happy effects from it.

THE Lady, in her next letter, gives Miss Howe an account of what has passed between Mr. Lovelace and herself. She resents his behaviour with her usual dignity: But when she comes to mention Mr. Mennell's letter, she re-urges Miss Howe to perfect her scheme for her deliverance; being resolved to leave him. But, dating again, on his sending up to her Miss Montague's letter, she alters her mind, and desires her to suspend for the present, her application to Mrs. Townsend.

' I had begun, says she, to suspect all he had said
 ' of Mrs. Fretchville and her house; and even Mr.
 ' Mennell himself, though so well appearing a man.
 ' But now that I find Mr. Lovelace had apprized
 ' his relations of his intention to take it; and had
 ' engaged some of the Ladies to visit me there; I could
 ' hardly forbear blaming myself for censuring him
 ' as capable of so vile an imposture. But may he
 ' not thank himself for acting so very unaccounta-
 ' bly, and taking such needlessly-wry steps, as he has
 ' done; embarrassing, as I told him, his own mean-
 ' ings, if they were good ?

LETTER XXX.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Wednesday, May 24,

He gives his friend an account of their interview that morning; and of the happy effects of his cousin Montague's letter in his favour. Her reserves, however, he tells him, are not absolutely banished. But this he imputes to form.

IT is not in the power of woman *says he*, to be altogether sincere on these occasions. But why?—Do they think it so great a disgrace to be found out to be really what they *are*?

I regretted the illness of Mrs. Fretchville; as the intention I had to fix her dear self in the house before the happy knot was tied, would have set her in that independence in *appearance*, as well as *fact*, which was necessary to shew to all the world, that her choice was free; and as the ladies of my family would have been proud to make their court to her there; while the settlements and our equipages were preparing. But on any other account, there was no great matter in it; since when my happy day was over, we could, with so much convenience, go down to the Lawn, or to my Lord M's, or to either of my aunts in town; which would give full time to provide ourselves with servants and other accommodation.

How sweetly the charmer listen'd!

I asked her, if she had had the small-pox?

'Twas always a doubtful point with her mother and Mrs. Norton, she own'd. But altho' she was not afraid of it, she chose not unnecessarily to rush into places where it was.

Right,

Right, thought I—Else, I said, it would not have been amiss for her to see the house before she went into the country; for, if *she* liked it not, I was not obliged to have it.

She asked if she might take a copy of Miss Montague's letter.

I said, she might keep the letter itself and send it to Miss Howe, if she pleased; for that, I supposed, was her intention. She bow'd her head to me. There, Jack!—I shall have her courtsey to me, by-and-by I question not. What a devil had I to do, to terrify the sweet creature by my termagant projects!—Yet it was not amiss, I believe to make her afraid of me. She says, I am an unpolite man—And every polite instance from such a one, is deem'd a favour.

Talking of the settlements, I told her, that I had rather Pritchard (mentioned by my cousin Charlotte), had not been consulted on this occasion. Pritchard, indeed, was a very honest man; and had been for a generation in the family; and knew the estates, and the condition of them better than either my Lord or myself: But Pritchard, like other old men, was diffident and slow; and valued himself upon his skill as a draughts-man; and for the sake of that paltry reputation, must have all his forms preserved, were an imperial crown to depend upon his dispatch.

I kissed her unrepulsing hand no less than five times during this conversation. Lord, Jack, how my generous heart run over!—She was quite obliging at parting. She in a manner asked me *leave* to retire to re-peruse Charlotte's letter.—I think she bent her knees to me; but I won't be sure.—How happy might we have both been long ago, had the dear creature been always as complaisant to me! For I do love, respect, and, whether I deserved it or not, always had it, till I knew this proud beauty.

And

And now, Belford, are we in a train, or the duce is in it. Every fortified town has its strong and its weak place. I had carried on my attacks against the impregnable parts. I have no doubt but I shall either *shine* or *smuggle* her out of her cloak, since she and Miss Howe have intended to employ a smuggler against me.---All we wait for now, is my Lord's letter.

But I had like to have forgot to tell thee, that we have been not a little alarmed, by some inquiries that have been made after me and my beloved, by a man of good appearance; who yesterday procured a tradesman in the neighbourhood to send for Dorcas: Of whom he asked several questions relating to us: and particularly (as we boarded and lodged in one house), whether we were married?

This has given my beloved great uneasiness. And I could not help observing upon it, to her, how right a thing it was that we had given out below that we were married. The inquiry, most probably, I said, was from her brother's quarter; and now, perhaps, that our marriage was owned, we should hear no more of his machinations. The person, it seems, was curious to know the day that the ceremony was performed. But Dorcas refused to give him any other particulars, than that we *were* married; and was the more reserved, as he declined to tell her the motives of his inquiry.

L E T T E R. XXXI.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

May 24.

THE devil take this uncle of mine! He has at last sent me a letter, which I cannot shew, without exposing the head of our family for a fool. A confounded

founded parcel of pop-guns—has he let off upon me. I was in hopes he had exhausted his whole stock of this sort, in his letter to you.—To keep it back, to delay sending it, till he had recollect'd all this *farrago* of nonsense—Confound his *Wisdom of nations*, if so much of it is to be scraped together, in disgrace of itself, to make one egregious simpleton!—But I am glad I am fortified with this piece of flagrant folly, however; since, in all human affairs, the *convenient* and *inconvenient*, the *good* and the *bad*, are so mingled, that there is no having the one without the other.

I have already offer'd the bill inclosed in it to my beloved; and read to her part of the letter. But she refused the bill: And I, being in cash, shall return it. She seemed very desirous to peruse the whole letter. And when I told her, that were it not for exposing the writer, I would oblige her; she said, it would not be exposing his Lordship to shew it to her; and that she always preferred the heart to the head. I knew her meaning—But did not thank her for it.

All that makes for me in it, I will transcribe for her—Yet, hang it, she shall have the letter, and my soul with it, for one consenting kiss.

SHE has got the letter from me, without the reward. Deuce take me, if I had the courage to propose the condition! A new character this of bashfulness in thy friend.—I see, that a truly modest woman may make even a confident man keep his distance. By my soul, Belford, I believe, that nine women in ten, who fall, fall either from their own vanity, or levity, or for want of circumspection, and proper reserves.

I DID

I DID intend to take my reward on her returning a letter so favourable to us both. But she sent it to me, sealed up by Dorcas.—I might have thought that there were two or three hints in it, that she would be too nice immediately to appear to. I send it to thee; and here will stop, to give thee time to read it. Return it as soon as thou hast perused it.

LETTER XXXII.

Lord M. To ROBERT LOVELACE, Esq;

Tuesday, May 23.

IT is a long lane that has no turning.—Do not despise me for my proverbs—You know I was always fond of them; and, if you had been so too, it would have been the better for you, let me tell you. I dare swear, the fine lady you are so likely to be soon happy with, will be far from despising them; for I am told, that she writes well, and that all her letters are full of sentences. God convert you! for nobody but he and this lady can.

I have no manner of doubt now but that you will marry, as your father, and all your ancestors, did before you: Else you would have had no title to be my heir; nor can your descendants have any title to be yours, unless they are legitimate; that's worth your remembrance, Sir—*No man is always a fool, every man sometimes.*—But your follies, I hope, are now at an end.

I know, you have vowed revenge against this fine lady's family: But no more of that, now. You must look upon them all as your relations; and forgive, and forget. And when they see you make a good husband, and a good father (which God send, for all our sakes!), they will wonder at their nonsensical antipathy, and beg your pardon: But while they think you

you a vile fellow, and a rake, how can they either love you, or excuse their daughter?

And methinks I could wish to give a word of comfort to the lady, who, doubtless, must be under great fears, how she shall be able to hold-in such a wild creature, as you have hitherto been. I would hint to her, that, by strong arguments, and gentle words, she may do any thing with you ; for tho' you are too apt to be hot, gentle words will cool you, and bring you into the temper that is necessary for your cure.

Would to God, *my* poor lady, your aunt, who is dead and gone, had been a proper patient for the same remedy ! God rest her soul ! No reflections upon her memory ! *Worth is best known by want !* I know *hers* now ; and if I had went first, she would by this time have known *mine*.

There is great wisdom in that saying, *God send me a friend, that may tell me of my faults : If not, an enemy ; and he will.* Not that I am your enemy ; and that you know well. *The more noble any one is, the more humble :* So bear with me, if you would be thought noble.—Am I not your uncle ? And do I not design to be better to you, than your father could be ? Nay, I will be your father too, when the happy day comes ; since you desire it : And pray make my compliments to my dear niece ; and tell her, I wonder much that she has so long deferred your happiness.

Pray let her know, I will present HER (not *you*) either my Lancashire seat, or *The Lawn* in Hertfordshire ; and settle upon her a thousand pounds a year, penny-rents ; to shew her, that we are not a family to take base advantages : And you may have writings drawn, and settle as you will.—Honest Pritchard has the rent-roll of both these estates at his fingers end ; and has been a good old servant. I recommend

recommend him to your Lady's favour. I have already consulted him: He will tell you what is best for you, and most pleasing to me.

I am still very bad with my gout; but will come in a litter as soon as the day is fixed: It would be the joy of my heart, to join your hands. And let me tell you, if you do not make the best of husbands to so good a young lady, and one who has had so much courage for your sake, I will renounce you; and settle all I can upon her and hers by you, and leave you out of the question.

If any thing be wanting for your further security, I am ready to give it (tho' you know, that my word has always been look'd upon as my bond): And when the Harlowes know all this, let us see whether they are able to blush, and take shame upon themselves.

Your two aunts want only to know the day, to make all the country round them blaze, and all their tenants mad. And, if any one of mine be sober upon the occasion, Pritchard shall eject him. And, on the birth of the first child, if a son, I will do something more for you, and repeat all our rejoicings.

I ought indeed to have written sooner. But I knew, that if you thought me long, and were in haste as to your nuptials, you would write and tell me so. But my gout was very troublesome: And I am but a slow writer, you know, at best, For Composing is a thing, that tho' formerly I was very ready at it (as my Lord Lexington used to say); yet having left it off a great while, I am not so now. And I chose, on this occasion, to write all out of my own head and memory; and to give you my best advice; for I may never have such an opportunity again. You have had (God mend you!) a strange way of turning your back upon all I have said; this once, I hope, you

you will be more attentive to the advice I give you for your own good.

I had still another end; nay, two other ends.

The one was, That now you are upon the borders of wedlock, as I may say and *all your wild oats will be sown*, I would give you some instructions as to your public as well as private behaviour in life; which, intending you so much good as I do, you ought to hear; and perhaps would never have listen'd to, on any less extraordinary occasion.

The second is, That your dear lady-elect (who is, it seems, herself so fine and so sententious a writer) will see by this, that it is not our faults, nor for want of the best advice, that you was not a better man than you have hitherto been.

And now, in a few words, for the conduct I would wish you to follow in public, as well as in private; if you would think me worthy of advising. It shall be short; so be not uneasy.

As to the *private* life: Love your Lady as she deserves. *Let your actions praise you.* Be a good husband; and to give the lye to all your enemies; and make them ashame of their scandals: And let us have pride in saying, that Miss Harlowe has not done either herself, or family, any discredit by coming among us. Do this; and I, and your aunts, will love you for ever.

As to your *public* conduct:—This is what I could wish: But I reckon your Lady's wisdom will put us both right—No disparagement, Sir; since, with all your wit, you have not hitherto shewn much wisdom you know.

Get into parliament as soon as you can: For you have talents to make a great figure there. Who so proper to assist in making new holding laws, as those whom no law in being could hold?

Then,

Then, for so long as you will give attendance, in St. Stephen's chapel—(Its being called a chapel, I hope, will not *disgust* you: I am sure I have known many a riot there:—A Speaker has a hard time of it! But we *Peers* have no decorum.)—But what was I going to say?—I must go back.

For so long as you will give your attendance in parliament, for so long will you be out of mischief; out of *private* mischief, at least: And may St. Stephen's fate be yours, if you wilfully do *public* mischief!

When a new election comes, you will have two or three boroughs, you know, to choose out of:—But if you stay till then, I had rather you were for the shire.

You'll have interest enough, I am sure; and being so handsome a man, the women will make their husbands vote for you.

I shall long to read your speeches. I expect you will speak, if occasion offers, the very first day. You want no courage; and think highly enough of yourself, and lowly enough of every-body else, to speak on all occasions.

As to the methods of the house, you have spirit enough. I fear, to be too much above them: Take care of that—I don't so much fear your want of good manners. To *men*, you want no decency, if they don't provoke you: As to that, I wish you'd only learn to be as patient of contradiction from others, as you would have other people be to *you*.

Altho' I would not have you to be a Courtier; neither would I have you to be a Malecontent. I remember (for I have it down) what my old friend Archibald Hutcheson said, and it was a very good saying—(to Mr. Secretary Craggs, I think it was) ‘I look upon an administration, as entitled to every vote I can with good conscience give it; for a House of Commons should not needlessly put drags upon the

wheels of Government : And, when I have not given it my vote, it was with regret : And for my country's sake, I wish'd with all my heart, the measure had been such as I could have approved.

And another saying he had, which was this; ' Neither can an Opposition, neither can a Ministry, be always wrong. To be a plumb man therefore with either, is an infallible mark, that that man must mean more and worse than he will own he does mean.'

Are these Sayings bad, Sir? Are they to be despised?—Well then, why should I be despised for remembering them, and quoting them, as I loved to do? Let me tell you, if you loved my company more than you do, you would not be the worse for it: I may say so without any vanity; since it is other men's wisdom, and not my own, that I am so fond of. But to add a word or two more, on this occasion; and I may never have such another; for you *must* read this thro'—Love honest men, and herd with them, in the house and out of the house; by whatever names they be dignified or distinguished: *Keep good men company, and you shall be of the number.* But did I, or did I not, write this before?—Writing at so many different times, and such a quantity, one may forget.

You may come in for the title when I am dead and gone—God help me!—So I would have you keep an equilibrium. If once you get the name of being a fine speaker, you may have any thing: And, to be sure, you have naturally a great deal of elocution; a tongue that would delude an angel, as the women say: 'To their sorrow, some of them, poor creatures!—A leading man in the House of Commons, is a very important character; because that house has the giving of money: And *Money makes the mare to go*; ay, and Queens and Kings too, sometimes, to go in a man-

ner

ner very different from what they might otherwise choose to go, let me tell you.

However, methinks, I would not have you take a place neither—It will double your value, and your interest, if it be believed, that you will not: For, as you will then stand in no man's way, you will have no envy; but pure sterling respect; and both sides will court you.

For your part, you will not want a place, as some others do, to piece up their broken fortunes. If you can now live reputable upon two thousand pounds a year, it will be hard if you cannot hereafter upon seven or eight—Less you will not leave, if you oblige me; as now by marrying so fine a lady, very much you will—And all this, besides lady Betty's and lady Sarah's favours!—What, in the name of wonder, could possibly possess the proud Harlows! That Son, that Son of theirs!—But, for his dear sister's sake, I will say no more of them.

I never was offer'd a place myself: And the only one I would have taken, had I been offer'd it, was *Master of the Buckhounds*; for I loved hunting when I was young; and it carries a good sound with it for us who live in the country. Often have I thought of that excellent old adage; *He that eats the King's goose, shall be choaked with his feathers*. I wish to the Lord, this was truly consider'd by place-hunters! It would be better for them and for their poor families.—I could say a great deal more and all equally to the purpose: But really I am tired; and so I doubt are you. And besides, I would reserve something for conversation.

My cousins Montague, and my two sisters, join in compliments to my niece that is to be. If she would choose to have the knot tied among us, pray tell her, that we shall see it *securely done*: And we will make all the country ring, and blaze, for a week together. But so, I believe, I said before.

If

If any thing farther may be needful towards promoting your reciprocal felicity, let me know it ; and how you order about the day ; and all that. The inclosed bill is very much at your service : 'Tis payable at sight, as whatever else you may have occasion for, shall be.

So God bless you both ; and make things as convenient to my gout as you can ; tho' be it whenever it will, I will hobble to you ; for I long to see you ; and my niece full as much as you ; and am in expectation of that happy time,

Your most affectionate Uncle,

M.

LETTER XXXIII.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Thursday, May 25.

THOU seest, Belford, how we now drive before the wind.—The dear creature now comes almost at the first word, whenever I desire the honour of her company. I told her last night, that, apprehending delay from Pritchard's slowness, I was determined to leave it to my Lord to make his compliments in his own way ; and had actually that afternoon put my writings into the hands of a very eminent lawyer, Counsellor Williams, with directions for him to draw up settlements from my own estate, and conformable to those of my own mother ; which I put into his hands at the same time. It had been, I said, no small part of my concern, that her frequent displeasure, and our mutual misapprehensions, had hindered me from advising with her before, on this subject. Indeed, indeed, my dearest life, said I, you have hitherto afforded me but a very thorny courtship.

She

She was silent. *Kindly* silent. For well know I that she could have recriminated upon me with a vengeance.—But I was willing to see, if she were not loth to disoblige me now.—I comforted myself, I said, with the hopes, that all my difficulties were over ; and that every past disobligation would now be buried in oblivion..

Now, Belford, I have actually deposited these writings with Counsellor Williams ; and I expect the draughts in a week at furthest. So shall be doubly armed. For if I attempt, and fail, these will be ready to throw in, to make her have patience with me till I can try again.

I have more contrivances still in embryo. I could tell thee of an hundred, and still hold another hundred in petto, to pop in, as I go along, to excite thy surprize, and to keep up thy attention. Nor rave thou at me ; but if thou art my friend, think of Miss Howe's letters, and of her smuggling scheme. All owing to my fair captive's informations and incitements. Am I not a *villain, a fool, a Beelzebub*, with them already ?—Yet no harm done by me, nor so much as attempted ?

Every thing of this nature the dear creature answered (with a downcast eye, and a blushing cheek), she left to me.

I proposed my Lord's chapel for the celebration, where we might have the presence of Lady Betty, Lady Sarah, and my two cousins Montague.

She seemed not to favour a public celebration ; and waved this subject for the present. I did suppose, that she would not choose to be married in public, any more than me : So I pressed not this matter further just then.

But patterns I actually produced ; and a jeweller was to bring as this day several sets of jewels, for her choice. But the patterns she would not open. She

sighed at the mention of them ; The second patterns, she said, that had been offered to her : And very peremptorily forbid the jeweller's coming ; as well as declined my offer of getting my own mother's to be new-set ; at least for the present.

I do assure thee, Belford, I was in earnest in all this. My whole estate is nothing to me, put in competition with her hoped-for favour.

She then told me, that she had written her opinion of my general proposals ; and there had expressed her mind, as to the cloaths and jewels :—But on my behaviour to her, for no cause that she knew of, on Sunday night, she had torn the paper in two. I earnestly pressed her to let me be favoured with a sight of this paper, torn as it was. And after some hesitation, she withdrew and sent it to me by Dorcas

I perused it again. It was in a manner new to me, tho' I had read it so lately ; and by my soul I could hardly stand it. An hundred admirable creatures I called her to myself. But I charge thee write not a word to me in her favour, if thou meanest her well ; for if I spare her, it must be all *ex mero motu*.

You may easily suppose, when I was re-admitted to her presence, that I run over in her praises, and in vows of gratitude and everlasting love. But here's the devil ; she still receives all I say with reserve ; or if it be not with reserve, she receives it so much as her due, that she is not at all raised by it. Some women are undone by praise, by flattery. I myself am proud of praise. Perhaps thou wilt say, that those are most proud of it, who least deserve it—As those are of riches and grandeur, who are not born to either. I own, that it requires a soul to be superior to these foibles. Have I not then a soul ? Surely I have. Let me then be consider'd as an exception to the rule.

Now

Now have I a foundation to go upon in my terms. My Lord, in the exuberance of his generosity, mentions a thousand pounds a year penny-rents. This I know, that were I to marry this lady, he would rather settle upon her all he has a mind to settle, than upon me: And has even threatened, that if I prove not a good husband to her, he will leave all he can at his death, from me, to her. Yet considers not, that a woman so perfect, can never be displeased with her husband but to *his* disgrace; for who will blame her? Another reason, why a Lovelace should not wish to marry a CLARISSA.

But what a petty fellow of an uncle mine, to think of making a wife independent of her emperor, and a rebel of course—Yet I snarted himself for an error of this kind!

My beloved, in her torn paper, mentions but two hundred pounds a year for her separate use. I insisted upon her naming a larger sum. She said, it might then be three; and I, for fear she should suspect very large offers, named five, and the intire disposal of all arrears in her father's hands, for the benefit of Mrs. Norton, or whom she pleased.

She said that the good woman would be uneasy, if any thing more than a competency were done for her. She was for suiting all her dispositions of this kind, she said, to the usual way of life of the person. To go beyond it, was but to put the benefitted upon projects, or to make them awkward in a new state, when they might shine in that they were accustomed to. And to put it in so good a mother's power to give her son a beginning in his business, at a proper time; yet to leave her something for herself, to set her above want, or the necessity of taking back from her child, what she had been enabled to bestow upon him, would be the height of such a worthy parents ambition.

Here

Here is prudence ! Here is judgment in so young a creature ! How do I hate the Harlowes for producing such an angel !—O why, why, did she refuse my sincere address to the knot before we came to this house !

But yet, what mortifies my pride, is, that this exalted creature, if I were to marry her, would not be governed in her behaviour to me by love, but by generosity merely, or by blind duty, and had rather live single, than be mine.

I cannot bear this. I would have the woman whom I honour with my name, if ever I confer this honour upon any, forego even her superior duties for me. I would have her look after me when I go out, as far as she can see me, as my Rosebud after her Johnny; and meet me at my return with rapture. I would be the subject of her dreams, as well as of her waking thoughts. I would have her look upon every moment lost, that is not passed with me: Sing to me, read to me, play to me when I pleased; no joy so great as in obeying me. When I should be inclined to love, overwhelm me with it; when to be serious or solitary, if intrusive, awfully so; retiring at a nod; approaching me only if I smiled encouragement: Steal into my presence with silence; out of it, if not noticed, on tiptoe. Be a *Lady Easy* to all my pleasures, and valuing those most, who most contributed to them; only sighing in private, that it was not *herself* at the time. —Thus of old did the contending wives of the honest patriarchs; each recommending her handmaid to her lord, as she thought it would oblige him, and looking upon the genial product as her own.

The gentle Waller says, *Women are born to be controul'd.* Gentle as he was, he knew that. A tyrant husband makes a dutiful wife. And why do the Sex love rakes, but because they know how to direct their uncertain wills, and manage them ?

ANOTHER

ANOTHER agreeable conversation. The day of days the subject. As to fixing a particular one, that need not be done till the settlements are completed. As to marrying at my Lord's chapel, the ladies of my family present, that would be making a public affair of it; and my charmer observed with regret, that it seemed to be my Lord's intention to make it so.

It could not be imagined, I said, but that his Lordship's setting out in a litter, and coming to town, as well as his taste for glare, and the joy he would take to see me married at last, would give it as much the air of a public marriage, as if the ceremony were performed at his own chapel, all the ladies present.

She could not bear the thoughts of a public day. It would carry with it an air of insult upon her whole family. And, for her part, if my Lord would not take it amiss (and perhaps he would not, as the motion came not from himself, but from me), she would very willingly dispense with his Lordship's presence; the rather as dress and appearance would then be unnecessary. For she could not bear to think of decking her person, while her parents were in tears.

How excellent this, did not her parents richly deserve to be in tears!

See, Belford, with so charming a niceness, we might have been a long time ago upon the verge of the state, and yet found a great deal to do, before we enter'd into it.

All obedience, all resignation—No will but hers. I withdrew, and wrote directly to my Lord; and she not disapproving of it, sent it away. The purport as follows; for I took no copy.

' That I was much obliged to his Lordship for his intended goodness to me on an occasion that was the most solemn and awful of my life. That the admirable Lady, whom he so justly praised, thought his Lordship's proposals in her favour too high.

‘ That she chose not to make a public appearance, if, without disobligeing my friends, she could avoid it, till a reconciliation with her own could be effected. That altho’ she expressed a grateful sense of his Lordship’s consent to give her to me with his own hand; yet presuming, that the motive to his kind intention, was rather to do her honour, than that it otherwise would have been his own choice (especially as travelling would be at this time so inconvenient to him,) she thought it adviseable to save his Lordship trouble on this occasion; and hoped he would take, as meant, her declining the favour.

‘ The Lawn, I tell him, will be most acceptable to retire to; and still the more, as it is so to his Lordship.’

‘ But, if he pleases, the jointure may be made from my own estate; leaving to his Lordship’s goodness the alternative.’

‘ That I had offer’d to present to the Lady his Lordship’s bill; but on her declining to accept of it (having myself no present occasion for it), I returned it inclosed, with my thanks, &c.’

‘ And is not this going a plaguy length? What a figure should I make in rakish annals, if at last I should be caught in my own gin?’

The Sex may say what they will, but a poor innocent fellow had need to take great care of himself, when he dances upon the edge of the matrimonial precipice. Many a faint-hearted man, when he began in jest, or only designed to ape gallantry, has been forced into earnest, by being over-prompt, and taken at his word, not knowing how to own that he meant less, than the Lady supposed he meant. I am the better enabled to judge that this must have been the case, of many a sneaking varlet; because I, who know the female world as well as any man in it

of

of my standing, am so frequently in doubt of myself, and know not what to make of the matter.

Then these little fly rogues, how they lie couchant, ready to spring upon us harmless fellows, the moment we are in their reach!—When the ice is once broken for them, how swiftly can they make to port!—Meantime, the subject they can least *speak* to, they most *think* of. Nor can you talk of the ceremony before they have laid out in their minds how it is all to be.—Little saucy-face designers! how first they draw themselves in, then us!

But be all these things as they will, Lord M. never in his life received so handsome a letter as this from his nephew

LOVELACE.

THE Lady, after having given to Miss Howe the particulars which are contained in Mr. Lovelace's last letter, thus expresses herself.

' A principal consolation arising from these favourable appearances, is, that I who have now but one only friend, shall most probably, and if it be not my own fault, have as many new ones, as there are persons in Mr. Lovelace's family; and this whether Mr. Lovelace treat me kindly, or not. And who knows, but that by degrees, those new friends, by their rank and merit, may have weight enough to get me restored to the favour of my relations? Till which can be effected, I shall not be tolerably easy. Happy I never expect to be. Mr. Lovelace's mind and mine are vastly different; different in *essentials*.

' But as matters are at present circumstanced, I pray you, my dear friend, to keep to yourself every thing that, revealed, might bring discredit to him.—Better any-body expose a husband than a wife, if I am to be so: and what is said by you will be thought to come from me.

‘ It shall be my constant prayer, that all the fel-
cities which this world can afford, may be yours.
• And that the Almighty will never suffer you nor
• yours to the remotest posterity, to want such a
• friend, as my Anna Howe has been to

Her CLARISSA HARLOWE.’

Mr. Lovelace, to shew the wantonness of his in-
vention, in his next, gives his friend an account of a
scheme he had framed to be revenged on Miss Howe,
when she set out for the isle of Wight; which he
heard she was to do, accompanied by her mother
and Mr. Hickman, in order to visit a rich aunt there,
who desired to see *her*, and her future consort, be-
fore she changed her name. But as he does not in-
tend to carry it into execution, it is omitted.

LETTER XXXIV.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

IF, Belford, thou likest not my plot upon Miss Howe, I have three or four more as good in my own opinion; better, perhaps, they will be in thine: And so, 'tis but getting loose from thy present engage-
ment, and thou shalt pick and choose. But as for
thy three brethren, they must do as I'd have them: And so, indeed, must thou:—Else why am I your general?—But I will refer this subject to its proper season. Thou knowest, that I never absolutely con-
clude upon a project, till 'tis time for execution: And then lightning strikes not quicker than I.

And now to the subject next my heart.

Wilt thou believe me, when I tell thee, that I have so many contrivances rising up and crowding upon me for preference, with regard to my Gloriana, that I hardly

hardly know which to choose?—I could tell thee of no less than six princely ones, any of which *must* do. But as the dear creature has not grudged giving me trouble, I think I ought not, in gratitude to spare combustibles for her; but, on the contrary, to make her stare and stand aghast, by springing three or four mines at once.

Thou remembrest what Shakespear, in his Troilus and Cressida, makes Hector, who, however, is not used to boast, say to Achilles, in an interview between them; and which, applied to this watchful Lady, and to the vexation she has given me, and to the certainty I now think I have of subduing her; will run thus:—Supposing the charmer before me; and I meditating her sweet person from head to foot:

*Henceforth, O watchful fair one, guard thee well:
For I'll not kill thee There! nor There! nor There!
But, by the zone that circles Venus' waist,
I'll kill thee Ev'ry-where; yea, o'er and o'er.
Thou, wifst Belford, pardon me this brag:
Her watchfulness draws folly from my lips;
But I'll endeavour deeds to match the words,
Or may I never—*

Then, I imagine thee interposing to qualify my impatience, as Ajax did to Achilles:

*—Do not chafe thee, cousin:
—And let these threats alone,
Till accident or purpose bring thee to it.
And now, Jack, what dost think?
That thou art a cursed fellow, if—
If! No If's—But I shall be very sick to-morrow.
I shall, 'faith.*

Sick!—Why sick?—What a devil shouldst thou be sick for?

For

For more good reasons than one, Belford.

I should be glad to hear but one.—Sick, quotha! Of all thy roguish inventions, I should not have thought of this.

Perhaps thou thinkest my view to be, to draw the lady to my bedside: That's a trick of three or four thousand years old; and I should find it much more to my purpose, if I could get to her's. However, I'll condescend to make thee as wise as myself.

I am excessively disturb'd about this smuggling scheme of Miss Howe. I have no doubt, that my fair one will fly from me, if she can, were I to make an attempt, and miscarry. I once believed she loved me: But now I doubt whether she does or not: At least, that it is with such an *ardor*, as Miss Howe calls it, as will make her overlook a premeditated fault, should I be guilty of one.

And what will being sick do for thee?

Have patience. I don't intend be so very bad as Dorcas shall represent me to be. But yet I know I shall reach confoundedly, and bring up some clotted blood. To be sure, I shall break a vessel: There's no doubt of that; and a bottle of Eaton's styptic shall be sent for; but no doctor. If she has *humanity*, she will be concerned. But if she has *love*, let it have been push'd ever so far back, it will, on this occasion, come forward, and shew itself; not only in her eye, but in every line of her sweet face.

I will be very intrepid. I will not fear death, or any thing else. I will be sure of being well in an hour or two, having formerly found great benefit by this balsamic medicine, on occasion of an inward bruise by a fall from my horse in hunting, of which, perhaps, this malady may be the remains. And this will shew her, that tho' those about me may make the most of it, I don't; and so can have no design in it.

Well,

Well, methinks thou sayest, I begin to think tolerably of device.

I knew thou wouldest, when I explained myself. Another time prepare to wonder ; and banish doubt.

Now, Belford, if she be not much concerned at the broken vessel, which, in one so fiery in his temper as I have the reputation to be thought, may be very dangerous ; a malady that I shall calmly attribute to the harasses and doubts, that I have laboured under for some time past ; which will be a further proof of my love, and will demand a grateful return —

What then, thou egregious contriver ?

Why then I shall have the less remorse, if I am to use a little violence : For can she deserve compassion, who shews none ?

And what if she shew a great deal of concern ?

Then shall I be in hope of building on a good foundation. Love hides a multitude of faults, and diminishes those it cannot hide. Love, when found out, or acknowledged, authorizes freedom ; and freedom begets freedom ; and I shall then see how far I can go.

Well but, Lovelace, how the deuce wilt thou, with that full health and vigour of constitution, and with that bloom in thy face, make any-body believe thou art sick ?

How ! — Why take a few grains of Ipecacuanha ; enough to make me reach like a fury.

Good ! — But how wilt thou manage to bring up blood, and not hurt thyself ?

Foolish fellow ! — Are there not pigeons and chickens in every poulters shop ?

Cry thy mercy.

But then I will be persuaded by Mrs. Sinclair, that I have of late confined myself too much ; and so will have a chair called, and be carried to the Park ; where I will try to walk half the length of the Mall, or so ; and

and in my return, amuse myself at White's or the Cocoa.

And what will this do?

Questioning again?—I am afraid thou'rt an infidel, Belford.—Why then shall I not know if my beloved offers to go out in my absence?—And shall I not see whether she receives me with tenderness at my return? But this is not all: I have a foreboding that something affecting will happen while I am out. But of this more in its place.

And now, Belford, wilt thou, or wilt thou not, allow, that it is a right thing to be sick?—Lord, Jack, so much delight do I take in my contrivances, that I shall be half-sorry, when the occasion for them is over; for never, never shall I again have such a charming exercise for my invention.

Mean time these plaguy women are so impertinent, so full of reproaches, that I know not how to do any thing but curse them: And then, truly, they are for helping me out with some of their trite and vulgar artifices.—Sally particularly; who pretends to be a mighty contriver, has just now, in an insolent manner, told me, on my rejecting her proffer'd aids, that I had no mind to conquer; and that I was so wicked as to intend to marry, tho' I would not own it to her.

Because this little devil made her first sacrifice at my altar, she thinks she may take any liberty with me: And what makes her outrageous at times, is, that I have, for a long time *studiously*, as she says, slighted her too readily offer'd favours: But is it not very impudent in her to think, that I will be any man's successor? It is not come to that neither. This, thou knowest, was always my rule—*Once any other man's, and I know it, and never more mine.* It is for such as thou, and thy brethren, to take up with *barlets*: I have been always aiming at the merit of a first discoverer.

The

The more devil I, perhaps thou'l't say, to endeavour,
to corrupt the uncorrupted.

But I say, *Not*; since, hence, I have but very few adulteries to answer for.

One affair, indeed, at Paris, with a married lady [I believe I never told you of it] touched my conscience a little: Yet brought on by the spirit of intrigue, more than by sheer wickedness. I'll give it thee in brief:

' A French marquis, somewhat in years, employ'd by his court in a public function at that of Madrid, had put his charming, young, new-married wife under the controul and *wardship*, as I may say, of his insolent sister, an old prude.

' I saw the lady at the opera. I liked her at first sight, and better at second, when I knew the situation she was in. So, pretending to make my addresses to the prude, got admittance to both.

' The first thing I had to do, was, to compliment my prude into shyness, by complaints of shyness: Next to take advantage of the marquis's situation, between her husband's jealousy, and his sister's arrogance, to inspire her with resentment; and, as I hoped, with a regard to my person. The French ladies have no dislike to intrigue.

' The sister began to suspect me: The lady had no mind to part with the company of the only man who had been permitted to visit there; and told me of her sister's suspicion.—I put her upon concealing the prude, as if unknown to me, in a closet in one of her own apartments, locking her in, and putting the key in her own pocket: And she was to question me on the sincerity of my professions to her sister, in her sister's hearing.

' She comply'd. My mistress was locked up. The lady and I took our seats. I owned fervent love, and made high professions: For the marquise put it

home

home to me. The prude was delighted with what she heard.

‘ And how dost think it ended?—I took my advantage of the lady herself, who durst not for her life cry out: Drew her after me to the next apartment, on pretence of going to seek her sister, who all the time was locked up in the closet.

‘ No woman ever gave me a private meeting for nothing; my dearest Miss Harlowe excepted.

‘ My ingenuity obtained my pardon: The lady being unable to forbear laughing thro’ the whole affair, to find both so uncommonly tricked; her gaolereſs her prisoner, safe locked up, and as much pleased as either of us.

‘ The English, Jack, do not often outwit the French.

‘ We had contrivances afterwards equally ingenious, in which the lady, the ice once broken [*once subdued, always subdued*]; co-operated—But a more tender tell-tale revealed the secret—Revealed it before the marquis could come to cover the disgrace. The sister was inveterate; the husband irreconcileable; in every respect unfit for a husband, even for a French one—made, perhaps, more delicate to these particulars by the customs of a people among whom he was then resident, so contrary to those of his own countrymen. She was obliged to throw herself into my protection—Nor thought herself unhappy in it, till childbed pangs seized her: Then penitence, and death, overtook her in the same hour!

Excuse a tear, Belford!—She deserv’d a better fate! What has such a vile inexorable husband to answer for!—The sister was punished effectually! That pleases me on reflection! The sister was punish’d effectually!—But perhaps I have told thee this story before.

L E T.

LETTER XXXV.

*Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;**Friday Evening.*

JUST returned from an airing with my charmer; comply'd with after great importunity. She was attended by the two nymphs. They both topp'd their parts; kept their eyes within bounds; made moral reflections now-and-then. O Jack! what devils are women, when all tests are got over, and we have completely ruin'd them!

The coach carried us to Hamstead, to Highgate, to Muzzle-hill; back to Hamstead to the Upper-Flask: There in compliment to the nymphs, my beloved consented to alight, and take a little refection. Then home early by Kentish Town.

Delightfully easy she: And so respectful and obliging I, all the way, and as we walk'd out upon the Heath, to view the variegated prospects, which that agreeable elevation affords, that she promised to take now-and-then a little excursion with me. I think, Miss Howe—I *think*, said I to myself, every now-and-then as we walked, that thy wicked devices are superseded.

We have both been writing ever-since we came home. I am to be favoured with her company for an hour, before she retires to rest.

All that obsequious love can suggest, in order to engage her tenderest sentiments for me against to-morrow's sickness, will I aim at when we meet. But at parting will complain of a disorder in my stomach.

WE have met. All was love and unexceptionable respect on my part. Ease and complaisance on hers.

She

She was concerned for my disorder. So sudden!—Just as we parted! But it was nothing. I should be quite well by morning.

Faith, Jack, I think I am sick already!—Is it possible for such a giddy fellow as me to persuade myself to be ill? I am a better mimic at this rate than I wish to be. But every nerve and fibre of me is always ready to contribute its aid, whether by health or by ailment, to carry a resolved-on roguery into execution.

Dorcas has transcribed for me the whole letter of Miss Howe, dated Sunday May 14. of which before I had only extracts. But she found no other letter added to that parcel. But this, and that which I copied myself in character last Sunday while she was at church, relating to the smuggling scheme, are enough for me.

DORCAS tells me, that her lady has been removing her papers from the mahogany-chest into a wainscot-box, which held her linen, and which she put into her dark closet. We have no key of that at present. No doubt but all her letters, previous to those I have come at, are in that box. Dorcas is uneasy upon it: Yet hopes that her lady does not suspect her; for she is sure that she laid in every thing as she found it.

LETTER XXXVI.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Cocoa-tree, Saturday, May 27.

THIS Ipecacuanha is a most disagreeable medicine! That these cursed physical folks can find out nothing to do us good, but what would poison the devil! In the other world, were they only to take physic,

physic, it would be punishment enough of itself for a mispent life. A doctor at one elbow, and an apothecary at the other, and the poor soul labouring under their prescribed operations, he need no worse tormentors.

But now this was to take down my countenance. It has done it: For, with violent reachings, having taken enough to make me sick, and not enough of water to carry it off, I presently looked as if I had kept my bed a fortnight. *Ill-jefting*, as I thought in the midst of the exercise, *with edge-tools*, and worse with *physical ones*.

Two hours it held me. I had forbid Dorcas to let my beloved know any thing of the matter; out of tenderness to her; being willing, when she knew my prohibition, to let her see that I *expected* her to be concerned for me:—What a worthless fellow *he* must be, whose own heart gives him up, as deserving of noone's regard!

Well, but Dorcas nevertheless is a *woman* and she can *whisper* to her lady the secret she is enjoin'd to keep!

Come hither, you toad (sick as a devil at the instant); Let me see what a mixture of grief and surprize may be beat up together in thy pudden-face.

That won't do. That dropt jaw, and mouth distended into the long oval, is more upon the Horrible, than the Grievous.

Nor that pinking and winking with thy *odious* eyes, as my charmer once called them.

A little better *That*; yet not quite right: But keep your mouth closer. You have a muscle or two which you have no command of, between your cheekbone and your lips, that should carry one corner of your mouth up towards your crows-foot, and that down to meet it.

There

There ! Begone ! Be in a plaguy hurry running up stairs and down, to fetch from the dining-room what you carry up on purpose to fetch, till motion extraordinary put you out of breath, and give you the sigh natural.

What's the matter, Dorcas ?

Nothing, Madam.

My beloved wonders she has not seen me this morning, no doubt ; but is too shy to say she wonders. Repeated What's the matter however, as Dorcas runs up and down stairs by her door, bring on, Oh ! Madam ! my master !—my master !

What ! How ! When !—And all the monosyllables of surprize.

[Within parenthesis let me tell thee, that I have often thought, that the little words in the republic of letters, like the little folks in a nation, are the most significant. The *trisyllables*, and the *rumblers* of syllables more than *three*, are but the good for little *magnates*.]

I must not tell you, Madam—my master ordered me not to tell you—But he is in a worse way than he thinks for—But he would not have *you* frightened.

High concern took possession of every sweet feature. She pity'd me !—By my soul, she pity'd me !

Where is he ?

Too much in a hurry for good manners [Another parenthesis, Jack ! Good manners are so little natural, that we ought to be *compos'd* to observe them : Politeness will not live in a *storm*], I cannot stay to answer questions, cries the wench—tho' desirous to answer [A third parenthesis—Like the people crying proclamations, running away from the customers they want to sell to]. This hurry puts the lady in a hurry to ask [A fourth by way of embellishing the third !] as the other does the people in a hurry to buy. And I have in my eye now a whole street raised, and

running

running after a proclamation or express crier, as if the first was a thief, the other his pursuers.

At last, O Lord! let Mrs. Lovelace know!—There is danger, to be sure! whisper'd from one nymph to another, in her hearing; but at the door, and so loud that my listening fair one might hear.

Out she darts.—As how! as how, Dorcas!

O Madam—A vomiting of blood! a vessel broke, to be sure!

Down she hastens; finds every one as busy over my blood in the entry, as if it were that of the Neapolitan saint.

In steps my charmer! with a face of sweet concern.
How do you, Mr. Lovelace?

O my best love!—Very well!—Very well!—Nothing at all! Nothing of consequence!—I shall be well in an instant!—straining again; for I was indeed plaguy sick, tho' no more blood came.

In short, Belford, I have gained my end. I see the dear soul loves me. I see she forgives me all that's past. I see I have credit for a new score.

Miss Howe, I defy thee, my dear—Mrs. Towns-end!—Who the devil are you?—Troop away with your contrabands. No smuggling! Nor smuggler, but myself! Nor will the choicest of my fair one's favours be long prohibited goods to me!

EVERY one now is sure, that she loves me. Tears were in her eyes more than once for me. She suffer'd me to take her hand, and kiss it as often as I pleased. On Mrs. Sinclair's mentioning, that I too much confin'd myself, she press'd me to take an airing; but obligingly desired me to be careful of myself. Wish'd I would advise with a physician. *God made physicians*, she said.

I did not think That Jack, God indeed made us All. But I fancy she meant *physic* instead of *physicians*; and

and then the phrase might mean what the vulgar phrase means;—*God sends meat, the devil cooks.*

I was well already, on taking the styptick from her dear hands.

On her requiring me to take the air, I asked, if I might have the honour of her company in a coach; and This, that I might observe if she had an intention of going out in my absence.

If she thought a chair were not a more proper vehicle for my case, she would with all her heart!

There's is a precious!

I kiss'd her hand again!—She was all goodness!—Would to Heaven I better deserv'd it, I said!—But all were golden days before us!—Her presence and generous concern had done every thing. I was well! Nothing ailed me. But since my beloved will have it so, I'll take a little airing!—Let a chair be called!—O my charmer!—were I to have owed this indisposition to my late harasses, and to the uneasiness I have had for disobliging you; all is infinitely compensated by your goodness!—All the art of healing is in your smiles!—Your late displeasure was the only malady!

While Mrs. Sinclair, and Dorcas, and Polly, and even poor silly Mabell (for Sally went out, as my angel came in), with uplifted hands and eyes, stood thanking Heaven that I was better, in audible whispers: She the power of love, cry'd one!—What a charming husband, another!—Happy couple, all!

O how the dear creature's cheek mantled—How her eyes sparkled!—How sweetly acceptable is praise to conscious merit, while it but reproaches when apply'd to the undeserving!—What a new, 'what a gay creation it makes at once in a diffident or dispirited heart!—

And now, Belford, was it not worth while to be sick? And yet I must tell thee, that too many pleasanter

fanter expedients offer themselves, to make trial any more of this confounded Ipecacuanha.

LETTER XXXVII.

*Miss CLARISSA HARLOWE, To Miss Howe.**Saturday, May 27.*

MR. LOVELACE, my dear, has been very ill. Suddenly taken. With a vomiting of blood in great quantities. Some vessel broken. He complained of a disorder in the stomach over-night. I was the more affected with it, as I am afraid it was occasioned by the violent contentions between us.—But was I in fault?

How lately did I think I hated him!—But hatred and anger, I see, are but temporary passions with me. One cannot, my dear, hate people in danger of death, or who are in distress or affliction. My heart, I find, is not proof against kindness, and acknowledgment of errors committed.

He took great care to have his illness concealed from me as long as it could. So tender in the violence of his disorder!—So desirous to make the best of it!—I wish he had not been ill in my sight. I was too much affected—Every-body alarming me with his danger—The poor man, from such high health so suddenly taken!—And so unprepared!—

He is gone out in a chair. I advised him to do so. I fear that my advice was wrong; since Quiet in such a disorder must needs be best. We are apt to be so ready, in cases of emergency, to give our advice, without judgment, or waiting for it!—I proposed a physician indeed; but he would not hear of one. I have great honour for the faculty; and the greater, as I have always observed, that those who treat the

professors of the art of healing contemptuously, too generally treat higher institutions in the same manner.

I am really very uneasy. For I have, I doubt, exposed myself to him, and to the women below. They indeed will excuse me, as they think us married. But if he be not generous, I shall have cause to regret this surprize; which has taught me more than I knew of myself; as I had reason to think myself unaccountably treated by him.

Nevertheless let me tell you (what I hope I may justly tell you), that if again he gives me cause to resume distance and reserve, I hope my reason will gather strength enough from his imperfections (for Mr. Lovelace, my dear, is not a wise man in all his ways) to enable me to keep my passions under.—What can we do more than govern ourselves by the temporary lights lent us?

You will not wonder that I am grave on this detection—*Detection*, must I call it? What can I call it?—I have not had heart's-ease enough, to inspect that heart as I ought.

Diffatisfied with myself, I am afraid to look back upon what I have written. And yet know not how to have done writing. I never was in such an odd frame of mind.—I know not how to describe it.—Was you ever so?—Afraid of the censure of her I love—Yet not conscious that I deserve it.

Of this, however, I am convinced, that I should indeed deserve censure, if I kept any secret of my heart from you.

But I will not add another word, after I have assured you, that I will look still more narrowly into myself: And that I am,

Your equally sincere and affectionate

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

L E T.

L E T T E R XXXVIII.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Sat. Evening.

I HAD a charming airing. No return of my malady. My heart perfectly easy, how could my stomach be otherwise?

But when I came home, I found that my sweet soul had been alarmed by a new incident. The inquiry after us both, in a very suspicious manner, and that by description of our persons, and not by names, by a servant in a blue livery turned up and trimmed with yellow.

Dorcas was called to him, as the upper servant, and she refusing to answer any of his questions, unless he told his business, and from whom he came, the fellow, as short as she, said, That if she would not answer him, perhaps she might answer somebody else; and went away out of humour.

Dorcas hurried up to her lady, and alarmed her not only with the fact, but with her own conjectures; adding, that he was an ill-looking fellow, and she was sure could come for no good.

The livery and the features of the servant were particularly inquired after, and as particularly described—*Lord bless her! no end of her alarms, she thought!* And then was she beforehand with every evil that could happen.

She wished Mr. Lovelace would come in.

Mr. Lovelace came in soon after; all lively, grateful, full of hopes, of duty, of love, to thank his charmer, and to congratulate with her upon the cure she had performed. And then she told the story, with all its circumstances; and Dorcas, to paint her

lady's fears, told us, that the servant was a sun-burnt fellow, and looks as if he had been at sea.

He was then, no doubt, Captain Singleton's servant, and the next news she should hear, was, that the house was surrounded by a whole ship's crew; the vessel lying no farther off, as she understood, than Rotherhithe.

Impossible, I said. Such an attempt would not be usher'd in by such a manner of inquiry. And why may it not rather be a servant of your cousin Morden's with notice of his arrival, and of his design to attend you?

This surmise delighted her. Her apprehensions went off, and she was at leisure to congratulate me upon my sudden recovery; which she did in the most obliging manner.

But we had not sat long together, when Dorcas again came fluttering up to tell us, that the footman, the *very* footman, was again at the door, and inquired, whether Mr. Lovelace and his lady, by name, had not lodgings in this house? He asked, he told Dorcas, for no harm: But this was a demonstration with my apprehensive fair-one, that harm was intended. And as the fellow had not been answered by Dorcas, I proposed to go down to the street-parlour, and hear what he had to say.

I see your causeless terror, my dearest life, said I, and your impatience—Will you be pleased to walk down—And without being observed, as he shall come no farther than the parlour-door, you may hear all that passes?

She consented. We went down. Dorcas bid the man come forward.—Well, friend, what is your business with Mr. or Mrs. Lovelace?

Bowing, scraping, I am sure you are the gentleman, Sir. Why, Sir, my business is only to know if

if your honour be here, and to be spoke with ; or if you shall be here for any time ?

Who came you from ?

From a gentleman who ordered me to say, if I was made to tell, but not else, it was from a friend of Mr. John Harlowe's, Mrs. Lovelace's eldest uncle.

The dear creature was ready to sink upon this. It was but of late, that she had provided herself with salts. She pulled them out.

Do you know any thing of Colonel Morden, friend, said I ?

No ; I never heard of his Name.

Of Captain Singleton ?

No, Sir. But the gentleman, my master, is a captain too.

What is his name ?

I don't know if I should tell.

There can be no harm in telling the gentleman's name, if you come upon a good account.

That I do ; for my master told me so ; and there is not an honest gentleman on the face of *God's* *yearth*.—His name is Captain Tomlinson, Sir.

I don't know such a one.

I believe not, Sir. He was pleased to say, He don't know your honour, Sir ; but I heard him say, as how he should not be an unwelcome visitor to you, for all that.

Do you know such a man as Captain Tomlinson, my dearest life, *aside*, your uncle's friend ?

No ; but my uncle may have acquaintance, no doubt, that I don't know.—But I hope, trembling, this is not a trick.

Well, friend, if your master has any thing to say to Mr. Lovelace, you may tell him, that Mr. Lovelace is here ; and will give him a meeting whenever he pleases.

The dear creature looked as if afraid that my engagement was too prompt for my own safety; and away went the fellow.—I wondering, that *she* might not wonder, that this Captain Tomlinson, whoever he was, came not himself, or sent not a letter the second time, when he had reason to suppose that I might be here.

Meantime, for fear that this should be a contrivance of James Harlowe's, who, I said, loved plotting, though he had not a head turned for it, I gave some precautionary directions to the servants, and the women, whom, for the greater parade, I assembled before us: And my beloved was resolved not to stir abroad till she saw the issue of this odd affair.

And here must I close though in so great a puzzle. Only let me add, that poor Belton wants thee; for I dare not stir for my life.

Mowbray and Tourville skulk about like vagabonds, without heads, without hands, without souls; having neither Thee nor Me to conduct them. They tell me, they shall rust beyond the power of oil or action to brighten them up, or give them motion.

How goes it with thy uncle?

LETTER XXXIX.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Sunday, May 28.

THIS story of Captain Tomlinson employed us not only for the time we were together last night, but all the while we sat at breakfast this morning. She would still have it, that it was the prelude to some mischief from Singleton. I insisted, that it might much more probably be a method taken by Colonel Morden to alarm her, previous to a personal visit. Travelled gentlemen affected to surprise in this manner.

manner. And why, dearest creature, said I, must every thing that happens, which we cannot immediately account for, be what we least wish?

She had had so many disagreeable things befall her of late, that her fears were too often stronger than her hopes.

And this, Madam, makes me apprehensive, that you will get into so low-spirited a way, that you will not be able to enjoy the happiness that seems to await us.

Her duty and her gratitude, she gravely said, to the Dispenser of all good, would secure her, she hoped, against unthankfulness. And a thankful spirit was the same as a joyful one.

So, Belford, for all her future joys she depends intirely upon the Invisible Good. She is certainly right; since those who fix least upon Second Causes are the least likely to be disappointed—And is not this gravity for her gravity?

She had hardly done speaking, when Dorcas came running up in a hurry—She set even *my* heart into a palpitation—Thump, thump, thump, like a precipitated pendulum in a clock-case—Flutter, flutter, flutter my charmer's, as by her sweet bosom rising to her chin I saw.

This lower class of people, my Beloved herself observed, were for ever aiming at the stupid Wonder-*f*!, and for making even common incidents matter of surprize.

Why the devil, said I to the wench, this alarming hurry?—And with your spread fingers, and your O Madams, and O Sirs!—and be curs'd to you: Would there be a second of time difference, had you come up slowly?

Captain Tomlinson, Sir!

Captain Devilson, what care I!—Do you see how you have disorder'd your lady?

Good Mr. Lovelace, said my charmer, trembling, [See, Jack, when she has an end to serve, I am good Mr. Lovelace] if—if my brother,—if Captain Singleton should appear—Pray now—I beseech you—Let me beg of you—to govern your temper—My brother is my brother—Capt. Singleton is but an *agent*.

My dearest life, folding my arms about her [When she asks favours, thought I, the devil's in it, if she will not allow of such innocent freedoms as this, from good Mr. Lovelace too], you shall be witness of all that passes between us. Dorcas, desire the gentleman to walk up.

Let me retire to the chamber first! Let me not be known to be in the house!

Charming dear!—Thou seest, Belford, she is afraid of leaving me!—O the little witchcrafts! Were it not for surprize now-and-then, how would an honest man know where to have them?

She withdrew to listen—And tho' this incident has not turned out to answer all I wish'd from it, yet is it necessary, if I would acquaint thee with my whole circulation, to be very particular in what passed between Captain Tomlinson and me.

Enter Captain Tomlinson in a riding-dress, whip in hand.

Your servant, Sir—Mr. Lovelace, I presume?

My name is Lovelace, Sir.

Excuse the Day,—Be pleased to excuse my Garb. I am obliged to go out of town directly, that I may return at night.

The Day is a good day. Your Garb needs no apology.

When I sent my servant, I did not know that I should *find time to do myself this honour*. All that I thought I could do to oblige my friend this journey, was *only* to assure myself of your abode; and whether there

there was a probability of being admitted to your speech, or to your Lady's.

Sir, you know best your own motives. What your time will permit you to do, you also best know. And here I am, attending your pleasure.

My charmer owned afterwards her concern on my being so short. Whatever I shall mingle of her emotions, thou wilt easily guess I had afterwards.

Sir, I hope no offence. I intend none.

None—None at all, Sir.

Sir, I have no interest in the affair I come about. I may appear officious; and if I thought I should, I would decline any concern in it, after I have just hinted what it is.

May I ask you, Sir, without offence, whether you wish to be reconciled, and to co-operate upon honourable terms, with *one* gentleman of the name of Harlowe; preparative, as it may be hoped, to a general reconciliation?

O how my heart flutter'd, cried my charmer!

I can't tell, Sir [*And then it flutter'd still more, no doubt*]: The whole family have used me extremely ill. They have taken greater liberties with my character than are justifiable, and with my family *too*; which I can less forgive.

Sir, Sir, I have done. I beg pardon for this intrusion.

My Beloved then was ready to sink, and thought very hardly of me.

But pray, Sir, to the immediate purpose of your present commission; since a commission it seems to be?

It is a commission, Sir; and such a one, as I thought would be agreeable to all parties, or I should not have given myself concern about it.

Perhaps it *may*, Sir, when known. But let me

ask you one previous question? Do you know Colonel Morden, Sir?

No, Sir. If you mean *personally*, I do not. But I have heard my good friend Mr. John Harlowe talk of him with great respect; and as a co-trustee with him in a certain trust.

I thought it probable, Sir, said I, that the Colonel might be arrived; that you might be a gentleman of his acquaintance; and that something of an agreeable surprize might be intended.

Had Colonel Morden been in England, Mr. John Harlowe would have known it; and then I should not have been a stranger to it.

Well but, Sir, have you then any commission to me from Mr. John Harlowe?

Sir, I will tell you, as briefly as I can, the whole of what I have to say; but you'll excuse me also a previous question, for which curiosity is not my motive; but it is necessary to be answered before I can proceed; as you will judge when you hear it.

What, pray, Sir, is your question?

Briefly, Whether you are actually, and *bona fide*, married to Miss Clarissa Harlowe?

I started, and, in a haughty tone, Is this, Sir, a question that *must* be answered before you can proceed in the business you have undertaken?

I mean no offence, Mr. Lovelace. Mr. Harlowe sought me to undertake this office. I have daughters and nieces of my own. I thought it a good office, or I, who have many considerable affairs upon my hands, had not accepted of it. I know the world; and will take the liberty to say, That, if that young Lady—

Captain Tomlinson, I think you are called?

My name is Tomlinson.

Why then, Captain Tomlinson, no *liberty*, as you call it, will be taken well, that is not extremely delicate, when that lady is mentioned.

When

When you had heard me out, Mr. Lovelace, and had found, I had so behaved, as to make the caution necessary, it would have been just to have given it.—Allow me to say, I know what is due to the character of a woman of virtue, as well as any man alive

Why, Sir! Why, Captain Tomlinson, you seem warm. If you intend any-thing by this [*O how I trembled!* said the Lady, *when she took notice of this part of our conversation afterwards:*] I will only say, that this is a privileged place. It is at present my home, and an asylum for any gentleman who thinks it worth his while to enquire after me, be the manner or end of his inquiry what it will.

I know not, Sir, that I have given occasion for this. I make no scruple to attend you *elsewhere*, if I am troublesome here, I was told, I had a warm young gentleman to deal with: But as I knew my intention, and that my commission was an amicable one, I was the less concerned about that. I am twice your age, Mr. Lovelace, I dare say: But I do assure you, that if either my message, or my manner, give you offence, I can suspend the one or the other for a day, or for ever, as you like. And so, Sir, any time before eight to-morrow morning, you will let me know your further commands.—And was going to tell me where he might be found.

Captain Tomlinson, said I, you answer well. I love a man of spirit. Have you not been in the army?

I have, Sir, but have turned my *sword into a plough-share*, as the scripture has it [*There was a clever fellow, Jack! He was a good man with somebody, I warrant!*].—And all my delight, added he, for some years past, has been in cultivating my paternal estate. I love a brave man, Mr. Lovelace, as well as ever I did in my life. But let me tell you, Sir, that when you come to my time of life, you will be of opinion, that

that there is not so much true bravery in youthful choler, as you may now think there is.

A clever fellow again, Belford—Ear and heart, both at once, he took in my charmer.—'Tis well, she says, *there are some men has wisdom in their anger.*

Well, Captain, that is reproof for reproof. So we are upon a foot. And now give me the pleasure of hearing your commission.

Sir, you must first allow me to repeat my question: Are you really, and *bona fide*, married to Miss Clarrissa Harlowe; Or are you not yet married?

Bluntly put, Captain. But if I answer that I *am* what then?

Why then, Sir, I shall say, that you are a man of honour.

That I hope I am, whether you *say* it or not, Captain Tomlinson.

Sir, I will be very frank in all that I have to *say* on this subject.—Mr. John Harlowe has lately found out, that you and his niece are both in the same lodgings; that you have been long so; and that the lady was at the Play with you yesterday was se'en-night; and he hopes, that you are actually married: He has indeed heard that you are; but, as he knows your enterprizing temper and that you have declared, that you disdain a relation to their family, he is willing by me to have your marriage confirmed from your own mouth, before he takes the steps he is inclined to take in his niece's favour. You will allow me to say, Mr. Lovelace, that he will not be satisfied with an answer that admits of the least doubt.

Let me tell you, Captain Tomlinson, that it is a damn'd degree of vileness for any man to suppose—

Sir—Mr. Lovelace—don't put yourself into a passion. The lady's relation's are jealous of the honour of their family. They have prejudices to overcome

as

as well as you—Advantage may have been taken—and the Lady, at the *time*, not to blame.

This Lady, Sir, could give no such advantages: And if she *had*, what must the *man* be, Captain Tomlinson, who could have taken them?—Do you know the Lady, Sir?

I never had the honour to see her but once; and that was at church; and should not know her again.

Not know her again, Sir!—I thought that there was not a man living who had once seen her, and would not know her among a thousand.

I remember, Sir, that I thought I never saw a finer woman in my life. But, Mr. Lovelace, I believe, you will allow, that it is better that her relations should have wronged *you*, than you the *Lady*. I hope, Sir, you will permit me to repeat my question.

Enter Dorcas, in a hurry.

A *gentleman*, this minute, Sir, desires to speak with your honour—*My Lady, Sir!*—[*Aside.*]

Could the dear creature put *Dorcas* upon telling this fib, yet want to save *me* one?—

Desire the gentleman to walk into one of the parlours. I will wait on him presently.

[*Exit Dorcas.*]

The dear creature, I doubted not, wanted to instruct me how to answer the Captain's home-put. I knew how I intended to answer it.—Plump, thou may'st be sure—But Dorcas's message stagger'd me. And yet I was upon one of my master strokes—Which was, To take advantage of the Captain's inquiries, and to make her own her marriage before him, as she had done to the people below; and if she had been brought to that, to induce her, for her uncle's satisfaction, to write him a letter of gratitude; which of course must have been signed *Clarissa Lovelace.*

Lovelace. I was loth, therefore, thou may'st believe, to attend her sudden commands: And yet, afraid of pushing matters beyond recovery with her, I thought proper to lead him from the question, to account for himself; for Mr. Harlowe's coming at the knowledge of where we are; and for other particulars which I knew would engage her attention; and which might possibly convince her of the necessity there was for her to acquiesce in the affirmative I was disposed to give. And this for her own sake; for what, as I asked her afterwards, is it to me, whether I am ever reconciled to a family I must for ever despise?

You think, Captain, that I have answered doubtfully to the question you have put. You *may* think so. And you must know, that I have a good deal of pride: And only, that you are a gentleman, and seem in this affair to be governed by generous principles, or I should ill brook being interrogated as to my honour to a lady so dear to me.—But before I answer more directly to the point, pray satisfy me in a question or two that I shall put to *you*.

With all my heart, Sir. Ask me what questions you please, I will answer them with sincerity and candour.

You say, That Mr. Harlowe has found out that we were at a Play together: And that we are both in the same lodgings—How pray, came he at this knowledge?—For, let me tell you, that I have, for certain considerations not respecting myself, condescended, that our abode should be kept secret. And this has been so strictly observed, that even Miss Howe, tho' she and my beloved correspond, knows not directly wither to send to us.

Why, Sir, the person who saw you at the Play, was a tenant of Mr. John Harlowe. He watched all your motions. When the Play was done, he followed your coach to your lodgings. And early the

next

next day, Sunday, he took horse, and acquainted his landlord with what he had observed.

How oddly things come about, Captain Tomlinson!—But does any other of the Harlowes know where we are?

It is an absolute secret to every other person of the family; and so it is intended to be kept: As also that Mr. John Harlowe is willing to enter into treaty with you, by me, if his niece be actually married; for perhaps he his aware, that he shall have difficulty enough with some people to bring about the desirable reconciliation, altho' he could give them this assurance.

I doubt it not, Captain.—To James Harlowe is all the family folly owing.—Fine fools! [heroically stalking about] to be governed by one to whom malice, and not genius, gives the busy liveliness that distinguishes him from a natural!—But how long, pray, Sir, has Mr. John Harlowe been in this pacific disposition?

I will tell you, Mr. Lovelace, and the occasion; and be very explicit upon it, and upon all that concerns you to know of me, and of the commission I have undertaken; and this the rather; as when you have heard me out, you will be satisfied, that I am not an officious man in this my present address to you.

I am all attention, Captain Tomlinson.

And so I doubt not was my beloved.

‘ You must know, Sir, said the Captain, that I have not been many months in Mr. John Harlowe’s neighbourhood. I removed from Northamptonshire, partly for the sake of better managing one of two Executorships, which I could not avoid engaging in (the affairs of which frequently call me to town, and are part of my present business), and partly for the sake of occupying a neglected farm, which has lately fallen into my hands. But tho’ an acquaintance of no longer standing, and that commencing on the Bowling-green [Uncle John is a great

‘ great bowler, Belford] (upon my decision of a point to every one’s satisfaction, which was appealed to me by all the gentlemen; and which might have been attended with bad consequences), no two brothers have a more cordial esteem for each other. You know, Mr. Lovelace, that there is a *consent*, as I may call it, in some minds, which will unite them stronger in a few hours, than years will do with others, whom yet we see not with disgust.’

Very true, Captain.

‘ It was on the foot of this avowed friendship on both sides, that on Monday the 15th, as I very well remember, Mr. Harlowe invited himself home with me. And when there, he acquainted me with the whole of the unhappy affair, that had made them all so uneasy. Till then I knew it only by report; for, intimate as we were, I forebore to speak of what was so near his heart, till he began first. And then he told me, that he had had an application made to him two or three days before by a gentleman whom he named, to induce him not only to be reconciled to his niece himself, but to forward for her a general reconciliation.

‘ A like application, he told me, had been made to his sister Harlowe, by a good woman whom every-body respected; who had intimated, that his niece, if encouraged, would again put herself into the protection of her friends, and leave you: But if not, that she must unavoidably be yours.’

I hope, Mr. Lovelace, I make no mischief.— You look concerned—You sigh, Sir.

Proceed, Captain Tomlinson. Pray proceed.— *And I sighed still more profoundly.*

‘ They all thought it extremely particular, that a lady should decline marriage with a man she had so lately gone away with.’

Pray, Captain—Pray, Mr. Tomlinson—No more of this subject. My beloved is an angel. In every thing

thing unblameable. Whatever faults there have been, have been theirs and mine. What you would further say, is, that the *unforgiving* family rejected her application. They did. She and I had a misunderstanding. *The falling out of lovers*—you know, Captain.—We have been happier ever since.

‘ Well, Sir; but Mr. John Harlowe could not but better consider the matter afterwards. And he desired my advice how to act in it. He told me, that no father ever loved a daughter as he loved this niece of his; whom, indeed, he used to call his *daughter-niece*. He said, she had really been unkindly treated by her brother and sister: And as your alliance, Sir, was far from being a discredit to their family, he would do his endeavour to reconcile all parties, if he could be sure that ye were actually man and wife.’

And what, pray, Captain, was your advice?

‘ I gave it as my opinion, that if his niece were unworthily treated, and in distress, as he apprehended from the application to him, he would soon hear of her again: But that it was likely, that this application was made without expecting it would succeed; and as a *salvo only*, to herself, for marrying without their consent. And the rather, as he had told me, that it came from a young lady her friend, and not in a direct way from herself; which young lady was no favourite of the family; and therefore would hardly have been employed, had success been expected.’

Very well, Captain Tomlinson.—Pray proceed. Here the matter rested till last Sunday evening, when Mr. John Harlowe came to me with the man who had seen you and your lady (as I hope she is) at the play; and who had assured him, that you both lodged in the same house.—And then the application having been so lately made, which implied that you were not then married, he was so

‘ uneasy

uneasy for his niece's honour, that I advised him to dispatch to town some one in whom he could confide, to make proper inquiries.'

Very well, Captain.—And was such a person employed on such an errand by her uncle?

'A trusty and discreet person was accordingly sent; and last Tuesday, I think it was (for he returned to us on the Wednesday), he made the inquiries among the neighbours first [The very inquiry, Jack, that gave us all so much uneasiness: But finding, that none of them could give any satisfactory account, the lady's woman was come at, who declared that you were actually married. But the inquisitor keeping himself on the reserve as to his employers, the girl refused to tell the day, or to give him other particulars.'

You give a very clear accounts of every-thing, Captain Tomlinson. Pray go on.

'The gentleman returned; and on his report Mr. Harlowe, having still doubts, and being willing to proceed on some grounds in so important a point, besought me, as my affairs called me frequently to town, to undertake this matter. You, Mr. Tomlinson, he was pleased to say, have children of your own: You know the world: You know what I drive at: You will proceed, I know, with understanding and spirit: And whatever you are satisfied with, shall satisfy me.'

Enter Dorcas, again in a hurry.

Sir, The Gentleman is impatient.

I will attend him presently.

The Captain then accounted for his not calling in person, when he had reason to think us here.

He said, he had business of consequence a few miles out of town, whether he thought he must have gone yesterday; and having been obliged to put off his little journey till this day, and understanding that we were within, not knowing whether he should have such

such another opportunity, he was willing to try his good fortune before he set out; and this made him come booted and spurred, as I saw him.

He dropped a hint in commendation of the people of the house; but it was in such a way, as to give no room for suspicion, that he thought it necessary to make any inquiries after the character of persons, who make so genteel an appearance, as he observed they do.

And here let me remark, to the same purpose, that my beloved might collect another circumstance in their favour, had she doubted them, from the silence of her uncle's inquisitor on Tuesday, among the neighbours.

And now, Sir, said he, that I believe I have satisfied you in every thing relating to my commission, I hope you will permit me to repeat my question—which is,—

Enter Dorcas again, out of breath.

Sir, the gentleman will step up to you—*My lady is impatient. She wonders at your honour's delay.* [Aside].

Excuse me, Captain, for one moment.

I have staid my full time, Mr. Lovelace.—What may result from my question and your answer, whatever it shall be, may take us up time.—And you are engaged.—Will you permit me to attend you in the morning, before I set out on my return?

You will then breakfast with me, Captain?

It must be early if I do. I must reach my own house to-morrow night, or I shall make the best of wives unhappy. And I have two or three places to call at in my way.

It shall be by seven o'clock, if you please, Captain. We are early folks. And this I will tell you, that if ever I am reconciled to a family so implacable as I have always found the Harlowes to be, it must be by the mediation of so cool and so moderate a gentleman as yourself.

And

And so, with the highest civilities on both sides, we parted. But for the private satisfaction of so good a man, I left him out of doubt, that we were man and wife, tho' I did not directly aver it.

LETTER XL.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Sunday Night.

THIS Captain Tomlinson is one of the happiest, as well as one of the best men in the world. What would I give to stand as high in my beloved's opinion, as he does! But yet, I am as good a man as he, were I to tell my own story, and have equal credit given to it. But the devil should have had him before I had seen him on the account he came upon, had I thought I should not have answered my principal end in it.—I hinted to thee in my last what that was.

But to the particulars of the conference between my fair one, and me, on her hasty messages; which I was loth to come to, because she has had a half triumph over me in it.

After I had attended the Captain down to the very passage, I returned to the dining-room, and put on a joyful air, on my beloved's entrance into it—O my dearest creature, let me congratulate you on a prospect so agreeable to your wishes—And I snatched her hand, and smothered it with my kisses.

I was going on; when interrupting me,—You see, Mr. Lovelace, said she, how you have embarrassed yourself, by your own obliquities!—You see, that plain and honest question, tho' upon it depends all the happiness you congratulate me upon the prospect of.

You know, my best love, what my prudent, and I will say, my *kind* motives were, for giving out, that we were married. You see, that I have taken

no advantage of it ; and that no inconvenience has followed it,—You see, that your uncle wants only to be assured from ourselves, and it is so—

Not another word to this purpose, Mr. Lovelace. I will not only risk, but I will forfeit the reconciliation so near my heart, rather than I will go on to countenance a story so untrue !

My dearest soul—Would you have me appear—

I would have you appear, Sir, as *you are* ! I am resolved that I will appear to my uncle's friend, and to my uncle, as *I am*.

For one week, my dearest life, cannot you for one week, only till the settlements—

Not for one hour, with my own consent.—You don't know, Sir, how much I have been afflicted, that I have appeared to the people below what I am not. But my uncle, Sir, shall never have it to upbraid me, nor will I to upbraid myself, that I have willfully passed myself upon him in false lights.

What, my dear, would you have me to say to the Captain to-morrow morning ?—I have given him room to think—

Then put him right Mr. Lovelace. Tell the truth. Tell him what you please of your relations favour to me : Tell him what you will about the settlements : And if when drawn, you will submit them to his perusal and approbation, it will shew him how much you are in earnest.

My dearest life—Do you think, that he would disapprove of the terms I have offer'd ?—No.

Then may I be accursed, if I willingly submit to be trampled under-foot by my enemies.

And may I, Mr. Lovelace, never be happy in this life, if I submit to the passing upon my uncle Harlowe a wilful and premeditated falsehood for truth !—I have too long laboured under the affliction which the rejection of all my friends has given me, to purchase their

their reconciliation now at so dear a price as at that of my veracity.

The women below, my dear—

What are they to me?—I want not to establish myself with them. Need they know all that passes between my relations and you and me?

Neither are they any thing to me Madam. Only, that when, for the sake of preventing the fatal mischiefs which might have attended your brother's projects, I have made them think us unmarried, I would not appear to them in a light, which you yourself think so shocking. By my soul, Madam, I had rather die, than contradict myself so flagrantly, after I have related to them so many circumstances of our marriage.

Well, Sir, the women may believe what they please, That I have given countenance to what you told them, is my error. The many circumstances which you own *one* untruth has drawn you in to relate is a justification of my refusal in the present case.

Don't you see, Madam, that your uncle wishes to find us married? May not the ceremony be privately over, before his mediation can take place?

Urge this point no farther, Mr. Lovelace. If you will not tell the truth, I will to-morrow morning, if I see Captain Tomlinson, tell it myself, Indeed I will.

Will you, Madam, consent that things pass as before with the people below? This mediation of Tomlinson *may* come to nothing. Your brother's schemes *may* be pursued; the rather, that now he will know (perhaps from your uncle), that you are not under a legal protection.—You will, at least, consent, that things pass *here* as before?

To permit this, is to go on in an error, Mr Lovelace. But as the occasion for so doing (if there *can* be

be an occasion in your opinion, that will warrant an untruth), will, as I presume, soon be over, I shall then less dispute that point with you. But a new error I will not be guilty of, if I can avoid it.

Can I, do you think, Madam, have any dishonourable view in the step I supposed you would not scruple to take towards a reconciliation with your own family?—Not for *my own* sake, you know, did I hope you to take it.—For what is it to me, if I am never reconciled to your family? I want no favours from them.

I hope, Mr. Lovelace, there is no occasion, in our present *not* disagreeable situation, to answer such a question. And let me say, that I shall think my prospects still more agreeable, if to-morrow morning, you will not only own the very truth, but give my uncle's friend such an account of the steps you have taken, and are taking, as may keep up my uncle's favourable intentions towards me. This you may do under what restrictions of secrecy you please. Captain Tomlinson is a prudent man; a promoter of family peace, you find; and, I dare say, may be made a friend.

I saw there was no help. I saw that the inflexible Harlowe spirit was all up in her.—A little witch!—A little—Forgive me, Love, for calling her names: And so I said, with an air, we have had too many misunderstandings, Madam, for me to wish for new ones; I will obey you without reserve. Had I not thought I should have obliged you by the other method (especially as the ceremony might have been over, before any thing could have operated from your uncle's intentions, and of consequence no untruth persisted in), I would not have proposed it.—But think not, my beloved creature, that you shall enjoy, without condition, this triumph over my judgment.

And

And then, clasping my arms about her, I gave her struggled-away cheek (her charming lip designed) a fervent kiss.—And your forgiveness of this sweet freedom (bowing) is that condition.

She was not mortally offended.—And now must I make out the rest as well as I can. But this I will tell thee, that altho' her triumph has not diminished my love for her; yet has it stimulated me more than ever to revenge, as thou wilt be apt to call it. But Victory or Conquest is the more proper name.

There is a pleasure, 'tis true, in subduing one of these watchful beauties. But, by my soul, Belford, men of our cast take twenty times the pains to be rogues, that it would cost them to be honest; and dearly with the sweat of our brows, and to the puzzling of our brains (to say nothing of the hazards we run), do we earn our purchase: And ought not therefore to be grudged our success, when we meet with it—Especially as, when we have obtained our end, satiety soon follows; and leaves us little or nothing to shew for it. But this, indeed, may be said of all worldly delights.—And is not that a grave reflection from me?

I was willing to write up to the time. Altho' I have not carried my principal point, I shall make something turn out in my favour from Captain Tomlinson's errand.—But let me give thee this caution; that thou do not pretend to judge of my devices by *parts*; but have patience till thou seest the *whole*. But once more I swear, that I will not be *out-Norris'd* by a pair of novices. And yet I am very apprehensive, at times, of the consequences of Miss Howe's Snuggling scheme.

'Tis late, or rather early; for the day begins to dawn upon me. I am plaguy heavy. Perhaps I need not to have told thee that. But will only indulge a doze in my chair, for an hour; then shake myself, wash,

wash, and refresh. At my time of life, with my constitution, that's all that's wanted.

Good night to me!—It cannot be broad day till I am awake.—Aw-w-w-w-haugh—Pox of this yawning!

Is not thy uncle dead yet?

What's come to mine, that he writes not to my last!—Hunting after more *wisdom of nations*, I suppose—Yaw—Yaw—Yawning again!—Pen, begone.

LETTER XLI.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Monday, May 29.

NOW have I established myself for ever in my charmer's heart.

The Captain came at seven, as promised, and ready equipped for his journey. My beloved chose not to give us her company till our first conversation was over.—Ashamed, I suppose [But to my shame, if she was], to be present at that part of it, which was to restore her to her virgin state, by my confession, after her *wifehood* had been reported to her uncle. But she took her cue nevertheless, and listened to all that passed.

The modestest women, Jack, must *think*, and think deeply sometimes.—I wonder whether they ever blush at those things by themselves, at which they have so charming a knack of blushing in company.—If not; and if blushing be a sign of grace or modesty, have not the sex as great a command over their blushes, as they are said to have over their tears? This reflection would lead me a great way into female minds, were I disposed to pursue it.

I told the Captain, that I would prevent his question; and accordingly, after I had enjoined the strict-

est secrecy, that no advantage might be given to James Harlowe; and which he answered for as well on Mr. Harlowe's part as his own; I acknowledged nakedly and fairly the whole truth,—To wit, ‘That we were not yet married—I gave him hints of the causes of procrastination,—Some of them owing to unhappy misunderstanding: But chiefly to the Lady's desire of previous reconciliation with her friends: and to a delicacy that had no example.’

Less nice ladies than this, Jack, love to have delays, wilful and *studied* delays, imputed to them in these cases—Yet are indelicate in their affected delicacy; for they do not thereby tacitly confess, that they expect to be the greatest gainers in wedlock; and that there is *self-denial* in the pride they take in delaying?

‘ I told him the reason of our passing to the people below as marry'd—Yet as under a vow of restriction, as to consummation, which had kept us both to the height, one of *forbearing*, the other of *vigilant punctilio*; even to the denial of those innocent freedoms, which betrothed lovers never scruple to allow and to take.

‘ I then communicated to him a copy of my proposals of settlement; the substance of her written answer; the contents of my letter of invitation to Lord M. to be her nuptial father; and of my Lord's generous reply. But said, that having apprehensions of delay from his infirmities, and my beloved choosing by all means (and that from principles of *unrequited duty*) a private solemnization, I had written to excuse his lordship's presence; and expected an answer every hour.

‘ The settlements, I told him, were actually drawing by counsellor Williams, of whose eminence he must have heard [He had]; and of the truth of this

‘ he

he might satisfy himself before he went out of town.

When these were drawn, approved, and ingrossed, nothing, I said, but signing, and the nomination of my happy day, would be wanting. I had a pride, I declared, in doing the highest justice to so beloved a creature, of my own voluntary motion, and without the intervention of a family from whom I had received the greatest insults. And this being our present situation, I was contented, that Mr. John Harlowe should suspend his reconciliatory purposes till our marriage were actually solemnized.'

The Captain was highly delighted with all I had said: Yet owned that as his dear friend Mr. Harlowe had expressed himself greatly pleased to hear that we were actually marry'd, he could have wished it had been so. But, nevertheless, he doubted not that all would be well.

He saw my reasons, he said, and approved of them, for making the gentlewomen below (whom again he *understood to be good sort of people*) believe, that the ceremony had passed; which so well accounted for what the lady's maid had told Mr. Harlowe's friend. Mr. James Harlowe, he said, had certainly ends to answer in keeping open the breach; and as certainly had formed a design to get his sister out of my hands. Wherefore it as much imported his worthy friend to keep this treaty a secret, as it did me; at least till he had formed his party, and taken his measures. Ill-will and passion were dreadful misrepresenters. It was amazing to him, that animosity could be carried so high against a man capable of views so pacific and so honourable, and who had shewn such a command of his temper, in this whole transaction. Generosity indeed, in every case, where love of stratagem and intrigue [I would excuse him] were not concerned, was a part of my character—

He was proceeding, when breakfast being ready, in came the empress of my heart, irradiating all around her, as with a glory—A benignity and graciousness in her respect, that, tho' natural to it, had been long banished from it.

Next to prostration lowly bowed the Captain. O how the sweet creature smiled her approbation of him! Reverence from one, begets reverence from another. Men are more of monkeys in imitation, than they think themselves—Involuntarily, in a manner, I bent my knee—My dearest life—and made a very fine speech on presenting the captain to her. No title, myself, to her lip or cheek, 'tis well he attempted not either—He was indeed ready to worship her;—could only touch her charming hand—

I have told the Captain, my dear creature—And then I briefly repeated, as if I had supposed she had not heard it, all I had told him.

He was astonish'd, that any-body could be displeas'd one moment with such an angel. He undertook her cause as the highest degree of merit to himself.

Never, I must needs say, did the angel so much *look* the angel. All placid, serene, smiling, self-assured: A more lovely flush than usual heightening her natural graces, and adding charms, even to radiance, to her charming complexion.

After we had seated ourselves, the agreeable subject was renew'd, as we took our chocolate. How happy should she be in her uncle's restored favour!

The Captain engaged for it—No more delays, he hoped, of her part! Let the happy day be but *once* over, all would then be right!—But was it improper to ask for copies of my proposals, and of her answer, in order to shew them to his dear friend her uncle?

As Mr. Lovelace pleased—O that the dear creature would always say so.

It must be in strict confidence then, I said—But would

would it not be better to shew her uncle the draught of the settlements, when drawn?

And will you *be so good*, as to allow of this, Mr. Lovelace?

There, Belford! We were once *The Quarrelsome*, but now we are *The Polite, Lovers*.—

Indeed, my dearest creature, I will, *if you desire it*, and if Captain Tomlinson will engage, that Mr. Harlowe shall keep them absolutely a secret; that I may not be subjected to the cavil and controul of any other of a family that have used me so very ill.

Now indeed, Sir, you are *very obliging*.

Dost think, Jack, that my face did not now also shine.

I held out my hand (first consecrating it with a kiss) for hers. She condescended to give it me. I prested it to my lips: You know not, Captain Tomlinson (with an air), all storms overblown, what a happy man.—

Charming couple! His hands lifted up—How will my good friend rejoice!—O that he were present!—You know not, Madam, how dear you still are to your uncle Harlowe!

I am unhappy ever to have disobliged him!

Not too much of that, however, fairest, thought I!

He repeated his refolutes of service, and that in so acceptable a manner, that the dear creature wished, that neither he, nor any of his, might ever want a friend of equal benevolence.

None of his, she said; for the Captain brought it in, that he had five children living, by one of the best of wives and mothers, whose excellent management made him as happy, as if his eight hundred pounds a year (which was all he had to boast of) were two thousand.

Without œconomy, the oraculous lady said, no

estate was large enough. *With* it, the least was not too small.

Lie still, teasing villain! lie still!—I was only speaking to my conscience, Jack.

And let me ask you, Mr. Lovelace, said the Captain; yet not so much from doubt, as that I may proceed upon sure grounds—You are *willing* to co-operate with my dear friend in a general reconciliation?

Let me tell you, Mr. Tomlinson, that if it can be distinguished, that my readiness to make up with a family, of whose generosity I have not had reason to think highly, is entirely owing to the value I have for this angel of a woman, I will not only co-operate with Mr. John Harlowe, as you ask; but I will meet Mr. James Harlowe senior, and his lady, all the way. And furthermore, to make the son James and Arabella quite easy, I will absolutely disclaim any further interest, whether living or dying, in any of the three brother's estates; contenting myself with what my beloved's grandfather has bequeathed to her: For I have reason to be abundantly satisfied with my own circumstances and prospects—Enough rewarded, were the not to bring a shilling in dowry, in a lady who has a merit superior to all the goods of fortune. True as the Gospel, Belford! Why had not this scene a real foundation?

The dear creature, by her eyes, expressed her gratitude, before her lips could utter it. O Mr. Lovelace, said she—You have infinitely—And there she stopt—

The Captain run over in my praise. He was really affected.

O that I had not such a mixture of revenge and pride in my love, thought I!—But [my old plea] cannot I make her amends at any time?—And is not her virtue now in the height of its probation?—Would she lay aside, like the friends of my uncontenting

tending Rosebud, all thought of defiance—Would she throw herself upon my mercy, and try me but one fortnight in the Life of Honour—What then!—I cannot say, What then.

Do not despise me, Jack, for my inconsistency—In no two letters perhaps agreeing with myself.—Who expects consistency in men of our character?—But I am mad with love—Fired by revenge—Puzzled with my own devices—My inventions are my curse—My pride my punishment—Drawn five or six ways at once—Can *she* possibly be so unhappy as *I*? O why, why was this woman so divinely excellent!—Yet how know I that she is?—What have been her trials? Have I had the courage to make a single one, upon her *person*, tho' fifty upon her *temper*?—Enough, I hope, to make her afraid of ever disengaging me more!

I must banish reflection, or I am a lost man. For these two hours past have I hated myself for my own contrivances. And this not only from what I *have* related to thee; but from what I have *further* to relate. But I have now once more steeled my heart. My vengeance is uppermost; for I have been re-perusing some of Miss Howe's virulence. The contempt they both held me in, I cannot bear.—

The happiest breakfast-time, my beloved owned, that she had ever known since she had left her father's house. *She might have let this alone.* The Captain renewed all his protestations of service. He would write me word how his dear friend received the account he should give him of the happy situation of our affairs, and what he thought of the settlements, as soon as I should send him the kindly-promised draughts. And we parted with great professions of mutual esteem; my beloved putting up vows for the success of his generous mediation.

When I returned from attending the Captain down stairs, which I did to the outward door, my beloved met me as I entered the dining-room; complacency reigning in every lovely feature.

You see me already, said she, another creature. You know not, Mr. Lovelace, how near my heart this hoped-for reconciliation is. I am now willing to banish every disagreeable remembrance. You know not, Sir, how much you have obliged me. And Oh, Mr. Lovelace, how happy shall I be, when my heart is lightened from the all-sinking weight of a father's curse! When my dear mamma (You don't know, Sir, half the excellencies of my dear mamma!) and what a kind heart she has, when it is left to follow its own impulses—When this blessed mamma) shall once more fold me to her indulgent bosom! When I shall again have uncles and aunts, and a brother and sister all striving who shall shew most kindness and favour to the poor outcast, then *no more an outcast!*—And you Mr. Lovelace to behold all this, and to be received into a family so dear to me, with welcome—What tho' a little cold at first? when they come to know you better, and to see you oftener, no fresh causes of disgust occurring; and you, as I hope, having enter'd upon a new course, all will be warmer and warmer love on both sides, till every one perhaps will wonder how they came to set themselves against you.

Then drying her eyes with her handkerchief, after a few moments pausing, on a sudden, as if recollecting that she had been led by her joy to an expression of it, which she had not intended I should see, she retired to her chamber with precipitation—Leaving me almost as unable to stand it, as herself.

In short, I was—I want words to say how I was—My nose had been made to tingle before; my eyes have before been made to glisten by this soul-moving beauty;

beauty; but so *very* much affected, I never was—for, trying to check my sensibility, it was too strong for me, and I even sobbed—Yes, by my soul, I *audibly* sobbed, and was forced to turn from her before she had well finished her affecting speech.

I want methinks, now I have owned the odd sensation, to describe it to thee—The thing was so strange to me—Something choaking, as it were, in my throat—I know not how—Yet, I must needs say, tho' I am out of countenance upon the recollection, that there was something very pretty in it; and I wish I could know it again, that I might have a more perfect idea of it, and be better able to describe it to thee.

But this effect of her joy on such an occasion gives me a high notion of what that virtue must be [What other name can I call it?] which in a mind so capable of delicate transport, should be able to make so charming a creature in her very bloom, all frost and snow to every advance of Love from the man she hates not. This must be all from Education too: Must it not, Belford? Can *Education* have stronger force in a woman's heart than *Nature*?—Sure it cannot. But if it can, how entirely right are parents to cultivate their daughters minds, and to inspire them with notions of reserve and distance to our sex; and indeed to make them think highly of their own? For pride is excellent substitute, let me tell thee, where virtue shines not out, as the sun, in its own unborrowed lustre.

LETTER XLII.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

AND now it is time to confess (and yet I know, that thy conjectures are beforehand with my exposition),

tion), that this Captain Tomlinson, who is so great a favourite with my charmer, and who takes so much delight in healing breaches, and reconciling differences, is neither a greater man nor a less, than honest Patrick M'Donald, attended by a discarded footman of his own finding out.

Thou knowest what a various-lifed rascal he is; and to what better hopes born and educated. But that ingenious knack of Forgery, for which he was expelled the Dublin University, and a detection since in Evidenceship, have been his ruin. For these have thrown him from one country to another; and at last, into the way of life, which would make him a fit husband for Miss Howe's Townsend with her contrabands. He is, thou knowest, admirably qualified for any enterprize that requires adroitness and solemnity. And can there, after all, be a higher piece of justice aimed at, than to keep one Smuggler in readiness to play agaist another?

‘ Well but Lovelace (methinks thou questionest),
 ‘ how camest thou to venture upon such a contrivance
 ‘ as this, when, as thou hast told me the Lady used
 ‘ to be a month at a time at this uncle's; and must
 ‘ therefore, in all probability, know, that there was
 ‘ not a Captain Tomlinson in all his neighbourhood;
 ‘ at least no one of the name so intimate with him,
 ‘ as this man pretends to be?’—

This objection, Jack, is so natural a one, that I could not help observing to my charmer, that she must surely have heard her uncle speak of this gentleman. No, she said, she never had. Besides, she had not been at her uncle Harlowe's for near ten months [*This I heard her say before*]: And there were several gentlemen who used the same Green, whom she knew not.

We are all very ready, thou knowest, to believe what we like.

And'

And what was the reason, thinkest thou, that she had not been of so long a time at this uncle's?—Why, this old sinner, who imagines himself intitled to call me to account for my freedoms with the Sex, has lately fallen into familiarities, as it is suspected, with his housekeeper, who assumes airs upon it.—A cursed deluding Sex!—In youth, middle age, or dotage, they take us all in.

Dost thou not see, however, that this housekeeper knows nothing, nor is to know any thing, of the treaty of reconciliation designed to be set on foot; and therefore the Uncle always comes to the Captain, the Captain goes not to the uncle: And this I surmised to the Lady. And then it was a natural suggestion, that the Captain was rather applied to, as he is a stranger to the rest of the family: Need I tell thee the meaning of all this?

But this intrigue of the *Antcent* is a piece of private history, the truth of which my beloved cares not to own, and indeed affects to disbelieve. As she does also some pifny gallantries of her foolish brother; which, by way of recrimination, I have hinted at, without naming my informant in their family.

Well, but methinks, thou questioned again, Is it not probable that Miss Howe will make inquiry after such a man as Tomlinson?—And when she cannot—

I know what thou wouldest say—But I have no doubt, that Wilson will be so good, if I desire it, as to give into my own hands any letter that may be brought by Collins to his house, for a week to come. And now I hope thou'rt satisfied.

I will conclude with a short story.

‘ Two neighbouring sovereigns were at war together; about some pitiful chuck-farthing thing or other; no matter what; for the least trifles will set princes and children at loggerheads. Their armies had been drawn up in a battalia some days, and the news

news of a decisive action expected every hour to arrive at each court. At last, issue was joined; a bloody battle was fought; and a fellow, who had been a spectator of it, arriving with the news of a complete victory, at the capital of one of the princes, some time before the appointed couriers, the bells were set a ringing, bonfires and illuminations were made, and the people went to bed intoxicated with joy and good liquor. But the next day all was reversed: the victorious enemy, pursuing his advantage, was expected every hour, at the gates of the almost defenceless capital. The first reporter was hereupon sought for, and found; and being questioned, pleaded a great deal of merit, in that he had, in so dismal a situation, taken such a space of time from the distress of his fellow citizens, and given it to festivity, as were the hours between the false good news and the real bad.'

Do thou, Belford, make the application. This I know, that I have given greater joy to my Beloved, than she had thought would so soon fall to her share. And as the human life is properly said to be chequer-work, no doubt but a person of her prudence will make the best of it, and set off so much good against so much bad, in order to strike as just a ballance as possible.

The Lady, in three several letters, acquaints her friend with the most material passages and conversations contained in those of Mr. Lovelace's preceding. These are her words, on relating what the commission of the pretended Tomlinson was, after the apprehensions that his distant inquiry had given her.

' At last, my dear, all these doubts and fears were cleared up, and banished; and, in their place, a delightful prospect was open to me. For it comes happily out (but at present it must be an absolute secret, for reasons which I shall mention in the sequel),

‘ quel), that the gentleman was sent by my uncle Harlowe [I thought he could not be angry with me for ever]: all owing to the conversation that passed between your good Mr. Hickman and him. For although Mr. Hickman’s application was too harshly rejected at the time, my uncle could not but think better of it afterwards, and of the arguments that worthy gentleman used in my favour.

‘ Who, upon a passionate repulse, would despair of having a reasonable request granted?—Who would not, by gentleness and condescension, endeavour to leave favourable impressions upon an angry mind; which when it comes coolly to reflect, may induce it to work itself into a condescending temper? To request a favour, as I have often said, is one thing; to challenge it as our due, is another. And what right has a petitioner to be angry at a *repulse*, if he has not a right to *demand* what he sue^s for as a *debt*?’

She describes Captain Tomlinson, on his breakfast visit, to be ‘ a grave good sort of man.’ And in another place, a genteel man, of great gravity, and a good aspect; she believes upwards of fifty years of age. I liked him, says she, as soon as I saw him.’

As her prospects are now more favourable than heretofore, she wishes, that her hopes of Mr. Lovelace’s so often promised reformation were better grounded than she is afraid they can be.

‘ We have both been extremely puzzled, my dear, says she, to reconcile some parts of Mr. Lovelace’s character with other parts of it: His good with his bad: such of the former in particular, as, his generosity to his tenants; His bounty to the inn-keeper’s daughter; His readiness to put me upon doing kind things by my good Norton, and others.

‘ A strange mixture in his mind, as I have told him! For he is certainly (as I have reason to say, ‘ looking

‘ looking back upon his past behaviour to me in twenty instances) a hard-hearted man.—Indeed my dear, I have thought more than once, that he had rather see me in tears, than give me reason to be pleased with him.

‘ My cousin Morden says, that three livers are remorseless and so they must be in the very nature of things.

‘ Mr. Lovelace is a proud man. That we have long observed. And I am truly afraid, that his very generosity is more owing to his *pride* and his *vanity*, than to that *philanthropy*, which distinguishes a benevolent mind.

‘ Money he values not, but as a means to support his pride and his independence. And it is easy, as I have often thought, for a person to part with a secondary appetite, when, by so doing, he can promote or gratify a first.

‘ I am afraid, my dear, that there must have been some fault in his Education. His natural *byas* was not I fancy, sufficiently attended to. He was instructed, perhaps (as his power was likely to be large), to do good and beneficent actions; but not proper motives, I doubt.

‘ If he had, his generosity would not have stopt at *pride*, but would have struck into *humanity*; and then would he not have contented himself with doing praise worthy things by fits and starts, or, as if relying on the doctrine of merits, he hoped by a good action to atone for a bad one; but he would have been uniformly noble, and done the good for its own sake.

‘ O my dear! what a lot have I drawn! *Pride* his *virtue*; and *Revenge* his other predominating quality!—This one consolation, however, remains: He is not an infidel, an unbeliever: Had he been an infidel, there would have been no room at all for

‘ hope

hope of him; but (priding himself, as he does, in his fertile invention) he would have been utterly abandoned, irreclaimable, and a savage.'

When she comes to relate those occasions, which Mr. Lovelace, in his narrative, acknowledges himself to be affected by, she thus expresses herself:

' He endeavoured, as one before, to conceal his emotion. But why, my dear, should these men (for Mr. Lovelace is not singular in this) think themselves above giving these beautiful proofs of a feeling heart? Were it in my power again to choose, or refuse, I would reject the man with contempt, who sought to suppress, or offered to deny, the power of being affected upon *proper* occasions, as either a savage-hearted creature, or any one who was so ignorant of the principal glory of the human nature, as to place his pride in a barbarous insensibility.'

' These lines translated from Juvenal by Mr. Tate, I have been often pleased with :

Compassion proper to mankind appears,
Which nature witness'd, when she lent us tears.
Of tender sentiments we only give
These proofs : To weep is OUR prerogative ;
To shew by pitying looks, and melting eyes,
How with a suff'ring friend we sympathize.
Who can all sense of others ills escape,
Is but a brute at best, in human shape.
THIS natural piety did first refine
Our wit, and rais'd our thoughts to things divine :
THIS proves our spirit of the gods descent,
While that of beasts is prone and downward bent.
To them, but earth-born life they did dispense ;
To us for mutual aid, celestial sense.

SHE

SHE takes notice to the advantage of the people of the house, that such a good man, as Captain Tomlinson, had spoken well of them, upon inquiry.

LETTER XLIII.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq.

Tuesday, May 30.

I HAVE a letter from Lord M. Such a one as I would wish for, if I intended matrimony. But as matters are circumstanced. I cannot think of shewing it to my Beloved.

My Lord regrets, ' that he is not to be the Lady's nuptial father. He seems apprehensive that I have still, specious as my reasons are, some mischief in my head.'

He graciously consents, ' that I may marry when I please; and offers one or both of my cousins to assist my bride, and to support her spirits on the occasion; since, as he understands, she is so much afraid to venture with me.'

' Pritchard, he tells me, has his final orders to draw up deeds, to assign over to me in perpetuity 1000l. *per annum*! which he will execute the same hour that the Lady in person owns her marriage. He consents, ' that the jointure be made from my own estate.'

He wishes, ' that the Lady would have accepted of his draught; and commends me for tendering it to her. But reproaches me for pride in not keeping it myself. *What the right-side gives up, the left, he says, may be the better for!*'

The girls, he means.

With all my heart, if I can have Miss Clarissa Harlowe, the devil takes every thing else.

A good

A good deal of other stuff writes this stupid Peer ; scribbling in several places half a dozen lines, apparently for no other reason, but to bring in as many musty words in an old saw.

If thou askest, How I can man manage, since my Beloved will wonder, that I have not an answer from my Lord to such a letter as I wrote to him ; and if I own I have one, will expect that I should shew it to her, as I did my letter !—This I answer—That I can be informed by Pritchard, that my Lord has the gout in his right hand ; and has ordered him to attend me in form, for my particular orders about the transfer : And I can see Pritchard, thou knowest, at the King's Arms, or where I please in town ; and he, by word of mouth, can acquaint me with every thing in my Lord's letter that is necessary for her to know.

Whenever it suits me, I can restore the old Peer to his right hand, and then can make him write a much more sensible letter than this he has now sent me.

Thou knowest, that an adroitness in the art of *manual imitation*, was one of my earliest attainments. It has been said, on this occasion, that had I been a bad man in *meum* and *tuam* matters I should not have been fit to live. As to the girls, we hold it no sin to cheat them. And are we not told, that it being *well* deceived consists the whole of human happiness ?

Wednesday, May 31.

ALL still happier and happier. A very high honour done me : A chariot, instead of a coach, permitted, purposely to indulge me in the subject of subjects.

Our discourse in this sweet airing turned upon our future manner of life. The day is bashfully promised me. *Soon*, was the answer to my repeated urgency. Our equipage, our servants, our liveries, were

were parts of the delightful subject. A desire that the wretch who had given me intelligence out of the family [honest Joseph Leman] might not be one of our menials ; and her resolution to have her faithful Hannah, whether recovered or not ; were signified ; and both as readily assented to.

The reconciliation prospect was enlarged upon. If her uncle Harlowe will but pave the way to it, and if it can be brought about, she shall be happy.—Happy, with a sigh, *as it is now possible she can be!*—She won't forbear, Jack!

I told her, that I had heard from Pritchard, just before we set out, and expected him in town to-morrow from Lord M. to take my directions. I spoke with gratitude of my Lord's kindness to me ; and with pleasure of my aunt's and cousin's veneration for her : As also of his Lordship's concern that his gout hinder'd him from writing a reply with his own hand to my last.

She pitied my Lord. She pitied poor Mrs. Fretchville too ; for she had the goodness to inquire after her. The dear creature pitied every-body that seemed to want pity. Happy in her own prospects, she has leisure to look abroad, and wishes every-body equally happy.

It is likely to go very hard with Mrs. Fretchville. Her face, which she had valued herself upon, will be utterly ruin'd. This good, however. she may reap from so great an evil :—As the greater malady generally swallows up the less, she may have a grief on this occasion, that may diminish the other grief, and make it tolerable.

I had a gentle reprimand for this light turn on so heavy an evil.—For what was the loss of beauty to the loss of a good husband?—Excellent creature!

Her

Her hopes, and her pleasure upon those hopes, that Miss Howe's mother would be reconciled to her, were also mentioned. *Good* Mrs. Howe was her word, for a woman so covetous, and so remorseless in her covetousness, that no one else would call her *good*. But this dear creature has such an extension in her love, as to be capable of valuing the most insignificant animal related to those whom she respects. *Love me, and love my dog* I have heard Lord M. say.—Who knows, but that I may in time, in compliment to myself, bring her to think well of thee, Jack?

But what am I about?—Am I not all this time arranging my own heart?—I know I am, by the remorse I feel in it, while my pen bears testimony to her excellence. But yet I must add (for no selfish consideration shall hinder me from doing justice to this admirable creature), that in this conversation she demonstrated so much prudent knowledge in every thing that relates to that part of the domestic management, which falls under the care of a mistress of a family, that I believe she has no equal of her years in the world.

I break off, to re-peruse some of Miss Howe's virulence.

Cursed letters, these of Miss Howe, Jack!—Do thou turn back to those of mine, where I take notice of them.
—*I proceed*—

Upon the whole, my charmer was all gentleness, all ease, all serenity, throughout this sweet excursion. Nor had she reason to be otherwise: For it being the first time that I had the honour of her company *sola*, I was resolved to encourage her, by my respectfulness, to repeat the favour.

On our return, I found the counsellor's clerk waiting for me, with a draught of the marriage-settlements.

They

They are drawn with only the necessary variations, from those made for my mother. The original of which (now returned by the counsellor), as well as the new draughts, I have put into my Beloved's hands.

This made the lawyer's work easy; nor can she have a better precedent; the great Lord S. having settled them, at the request of my mother's relations; all the difference, my charmer's are 100*l. per annum*, more than my mother's.

I offer'd to read to her the old deed, while she looked over the draught; for she had refused her presence at the examination with the clerk: But this she also declined.

I suppose she did not care to hear of so many children, first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh sons, and as many daughters, *to be begotten upon the body of the said Clarissa Harlowe.*

Charming matrimonial recitatives!—tho' it is always said *lawfully begotten* too—As if a man could beget children *unlawfully* upon the body of his own wife.—But thinkest thou not that these arch rogues the lawyers hereby intimate, that a man may have children by his wife *before* marriage?—This must be what they mean. Why will these fly-fellows put an honest man in mind of such rogueries?—But hence, as in numberless other instances, we see, that *Law* and *Gospel* are two very different things.

Dorcas, in our absence, tried to get at the wainscot box in the dark closet. But it cannot be done without violence. And to run a risque of consequence now, for mere curiosity-sake, would be inexcusable.

Wrs. Sinclair and the nymphs are all of opinion, that I am now so much of a favourite, and have such a visible share in her confidence, and even in her affections, that I may do what I will, and plead violence

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lence of *passion*; which they will have it makes violence of *action* pardonable with their sex; as well as an allowed extenuation with the unconcerned of both sexes; and they all offer their helping hands. Why not? they say: has she not passed for my wife before them all? And is she not in a fine way of being reconciled to her friends, which was the pretence for postponing consummation?

They again urge me, since it is so difficult to make *night* my friend, to an attempt in the *day*. They remind me, that the situation of their house is such, that no noises can be heard out of it; and ridicule me for making it necessary for a lady to be undressed. It was not always so with me, poor old man! Sally told me; saucily flinging her handkerchief in my face.

LETTER XLIV.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq:

Friday, June 2.

NOTWITHSTANDING my studied-for politeness and complaisance for some days past; and though I have wanted courage to throw the mask quite aside; yet I have made the dear creature more than once look about her, by the warm, tho' decent expressions of my passion. I have brought her to own, that I am more than indifferent to her: But as to LOVE, which I pressed her to acknowledge, *What need of acknowledgments of that sort, when a woman consents to marry?* — And once repulsing me with displeasure, *The proof of the true love I was vowing for her, was respect, not freedom.* And offering to defend myself, she told me, that all the conception she had been able to form of a faulty passion, was, that it must demonstrate itself as mine sought to do.

I endeavoured

I endeavoured to justify my passion, by laying over-delicacy at her door. That was *not*, she said, *my fault*, if it were *hers*. She must plainly tell me, that I appeared to her incapable of distinguishing what were the requisites of a pure mind. Perhaps, had the *libertine* presumption to amagine, that there was no difference in *heart*, nor any but what proceeded from *education* and *custom*, between the pure and the impure—And yet *custom alone*, as she observ'd, would make a second nature, as well in good as in bad habits.

I HAVE just now been called to account for some innocent liberties which I thought myself intitled to take before the women; as they suppose us married, and now within view of consummation.

I took the lecture very hardly; and with impatience wish'd for the happy day and hour, when I might call her all my own, and meet with no check from a niceness that had no example.

She looked at me with a bashful kind of contempt. I thought it *contempt*, and required the reason for it; not being conscious of offence, as I told her.

This is not the first time, Mr. Lovelace, said she, that I have had cause to be displeased with you, when *you*, perhaps, have not thought yourself exceptionable,—But, Sir, let me tell you, that the married state, in my eye, is a state of purity, and (I think she told me) not of *licentiousness*; so at least I understood her.

Marriage-purity, Jack!—Very comical, 'faith—Yet, sweet dears, half the female world ready to run away with a rake, *because* he is a rake; and for no other reason; nay, every other reason *against* their choice.

But have not you and I, Belford, seen young wives who would be thought modest; and when

maids,

maids, were fantastically shy; permit freedoms in public from their *lambent* husbands, which have shewn, that they have forgot what belongs either to prudence or decency? While every modest eye has sunk under the shameless effrontery, and every modest face been covered with blushes, for those who could not blush.

I once, upon such an occasion, proposed to a circle of a dozen, thus scandaliz'd, to withdraw; since they must needs see that as well the *lady*, as the gentleman, wanted to be in private. This motion had its effect upon the amorous pair; and I was applauded for the check given to their licentiousness.

But, upon another occasion of this sort, I acted a little more in character—For I ventured to make an attempt upon a bride, which I should not have had the courage to make, had not the unblushing passiveness with which she received her fond husband's public toyings (looking round her with triumph rather than with shame, upon every lady present), incited my curiosity to know if the same complacency might not be shewn to a private friend. 'Tis true, I was in honour obliged to keep the secret. But I never saw the turtles bill afterwards, but I thought of Number Two to the same female; and in my heart thanked the fond husband for the lesson he had taught his wife.

From what I have said, thou wilt see, that I approve of my beloved's exception to *public* loves. That, I hope, is all the charming *Isicle* means by *marriage-purity*.

From the whole of the above, thou wilt gather that I have not been a mere dangler, a Hickman, in the passed days, though not absolutely active, and a Lovelace.

The dear creature now considers herself as my wife-elect. The *unsadden'd* heart, no longer prudish, will not

not now, I hope, give the fable turn to every action of the man she dislikes not. And yet she must keep up so much reserve, as will justify past inflexibilities. Many and many a pretty soul would yield, were she not afraid that the man she favoured would think the worse of her for it. This is also a part of the Rake's Creed. But should she resent ever so strongly, she cannot now break with me; since, if she does, there will be an end of the family reconciliation; and that in a way highly discreditable to herself.

Sat. June 3.

JUST returned from Doctors-Commons: I have been endeavouring to get a licence. Very true Jack. I have the mortification to find a difficulty in obtaining this all-fettering instrument, as the Lady is of rank and fortune, and as there is no consent of father or *next friend*.

I made report of this difficulty. It is very right, she says, that such difficulties should be made. But not to a man of my known fortune, surely, Jack, tho' the woman were the daughter of a duke.

I asked, if she approved of the settlements? She said, she had compared them with my mother's, and had no objection. She had written to Miss Howe upon the subject, she owned; and to inform her of our present situation.

JUST now, in high good humour, my beloved returned me the draughts of the settlements; a copy of which I had sent to Captain Tomlinson. She complimented me, that she never had any doubt of my honour in cases of this nature—In matters between man and man nobody ever had, thou knowest. I had need, thou'l say, to have some good qualities.

Great

Great faults and great virtues are often found in the same person. In nothing *very* bad, but as to women: And did not one of them begin with me.

We have held that women have no souls: I am a very Jew in this point, and willing to believe they have not. And if so, to whom shall I be accountable for what I do to them? Nay, if souls they have, as there is no sex in Ethereals, nor need of any, what plea can a lady hold of injuries done in her lady-*state*, when there is an end of her lady-*ship*?

LETTER XLV.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Monday, June 5.

I AM now almost in despair of succeeding with this charming frost-piece by love or gentleness.—A copy of the draughts, as I told thee, has been sent to Captain Tomlinson; and that by a special messenger. Ingrossments are proceeding with. I have been again at the Commons. Should in all probability have procured a licence by Malory's means, had not Malory's friend the proctor been suddenly sent for to Cheshunt, to make an old-lady's will. Pritchard has told me by word of mouth, *though my charmer saw him not*, all that was necessary for her to know in the letter my Lord wrote, which I could not shew her; and taken my directions about the estates to be made over to me on my nuptials.—Yet with all these favourable appearances no conceding moment to be found, no improveable tenderness to be raised.

Twice indeed with rapture, which once she called rude, did I salute her; and each time, resenting the freedom, did she retire; tho', to do her justice, she favoured me again with her presence at my first in-

treaty, and took no notice of the cause of her withdrawing.

Is it policy to shew so open a resentment for innocent liberties, which, in her situation, she must so soon forgive?

Yet the woman who resents not initiatory freedoms must be lost. For Love is an incroacher. Love never goes backward. Love is always aspiring. Always must aspire. Nothing but the highest act of Love can satisfy an indulged Love. And what advantages has a lover, who values not breaking the peace, over his mistress, who is solicitous to keep it!

I have now at this instant wrought myself up, for the dozenth time, to a half resolution. A thousand agreeably things I have to say to her. She is in the dining room. Just gone up. She always expects me when there.

HIGH displeasure!—followed by an abrupt departure.

I sat down by her. I took both her hands in mine. I would *have* it so. All gentle my voice.—Her father mentioned with respect. Her mother with reverence. Even her brother amicably spoken of. I never thought I could have wished so ardently, as I told her I did wish, for a reconciliation with her family.

A sweet and grateful flush then overspread her fair face; a gentle sigh now-and-then heaved her handkerchief.

I perfectly long'd to hear from Captain Tomlinson. It was impossible for her uncle to find fault with the draught of her settlements: I would not, however, be understood, by sending them down, that I intended to put it in her uncle's power to delay my happy day. When, when, was it to be;

I would

I would hasten again to the Commons; and would not return without the licence.

The Lawn I proposed to retire to, as soon as the happy ceremony was over. This day and that day I proposed.

It was time enough to name the day, when the settlements were completed, and the licence obtained. Happy should she be, could the kind Captain Tomlinson obtain her uncle's presence privately!

A good hint!—It may perhaps be improved upon—Either for a *delay*, or a *pacifier*.

No new delays, for heaven's sake, I besought her; reproaching her gently for the past. Name but the day—(an early, day, I hoped in the following week)—that I might hail its approach, and number the tardy hours.

My cheek reclined on her shoulder—kissing her hands by turns. Rather bashfully than angrily reluctant, her hands sought to be withdrawn; her shoulder avoiding my reclined cheek—Apparently loth and more loth to quarrel with me; her downcast eye confessing more than her lips could utter.—Now surely, thought I, it is my time to try if she can forgive a still bolder freedom than I had ever yet taken.

I then gave her struggling hands liberty. I put one arm round her waist: I imprinted a kiss on her sweet lips, with a *Be quiet* only, and an averted face, as if she feared another.

Encouraged by so gentle a repulse, the tenderest things I said; and then, with my other hand, drew aside the handkerchief that concealed the beauty of beauties, and pressed with my burning lips the charm-
ingest breast that ever my ravished eyes beheld.

A very contrary passion to that which gave her bosom so delightful a swell, immediately took place. She struggled out of my incircling arms with indignation. I detained her reluctant hand. Let me go,

said she. I see there is no keeping terms with you. Base incroacher! Is this the design of your flattering speeches?—Far as matters have gone, I will for ever renounce you. You have an odious heart. Let me go, I tell you.—

I was forced to obey, and she flung from me, repeating *base*, and adding *flattering*, incroacher.

IN vain have I urged by Dorcas for the promised favour of dining with her. She would not dine *at all*. She *could not*.

But why makes she every inch of her person thus sacred? So near the time too, that she must suppose that all will be my own, by deed of purchase and settlement?

She has read, no doubt, of the art of the Eastern monarchs, who sequester themselves from the eyes of their subjects, in order to excite their adoration, when, upon some some solemn occasions, they think fit to appear in public.

But let me ask of thee, Belford, whether (on these solemn occasions) the preceding cavalcade; here a great officer, and there a great minister, with their satellites, and glaring equipages; do not prepare the eyes of the wondering beholders, by degrees, to bear the blaze of canopy'd majesty (what tho' but an ugly old man, perhaps himself? yet) glittering in the collected riches of his vast empire?

And should not my beloved, for her own sake, descend, by *degrees*, from *goddess-hood* into *humanity*? If it be *pride* that restrains her, ought not that *pride* to be punished? If, as in the Eastern emperors, it be *art* as well as *pride*, *art* is what she of all women need not use. If *shame*, what a *shame* to be ashamed to communicate to her adorer's sight the most admirable of her personal graces!

Let me perish, Belford, if I would not forego the brightest diadem in the world, for the pleasure of seeing a Twin-Lovelace at each charming breast, drawing from it his first sustenance; the pious task continued for one month, and no more!

I now, methinks, behold this most charming of women in this sweet office, pressing with her fine fingers the generous flood into the purple mouths of each eager hunter by turns: Her conscious eye now dropt on one, now on the other, with a sigh of maternal tenderness; and then raised up to my delighted eye, full of wishes, for the sake of the pretty varlets, and for her own sake, that I would deign to legitimate; that I would condescend to put on the nuptial fitters.

LETTER XLVI.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Monday, P. M.

A LETTER received from the worthy Captain Tomlinson, has introduced me into the presence of my charmer, sooner than perhaps I should otherwise have been admitted.

Sullen her brow, at her first entrance into the dining-room. But I took no notice of what had passed, and her anger slid away upon its own ice.

‘ The Captain after letting me know, that he chose not to write, till he had the promised draught of the settlements, acquaints me, that his friend Mr. John Harlowe in their first conference (which was held as soon as he got down), was extremely surprized, and even grieved (as he feared he would be) to hear, that we were not married. The world, he said, who knew my character, would be very censorious, were it owned, that we had lived so

long together unmarried in the same lodgings ; al.
tho' our marriage were now to be ever so publicly
celebrated.

His nephew James, he was sure, would make a
great handle of it against any motion that might be
made towards a reconciliation ; and with the great-
er success, as there was not a family in the king-
dom more jealous of their honour than theirs'

This is true of the Harlowes, Jack : They have
been called *The proud Harlowes* : And I have ever
found, that all young Honour is supercilious and
touchy.

But seest thou not how right I was in my endeav-
our to persuade my fair one to allow her uncle's
friend to think us married ; especially as he came
prepared to believe it ; and as her uncle hoped it was
so ?—But nothing on earth is so perverse, as a woman
when she is set upon marrying a point, and has a
meek man, or one who loves his peace, to deal with.

My beloved was vexed. She pulled out her hand-
kerchief : but was more inclined to blame me, than
herself.

Had you kept your word, Mr. Lovelace, and left
me when we came to town—And there she stopt ;
for she knew, that it was her own fault that we were
not marry'd before we left the country ; and how
could I leave her afterwards, while her brother was
plotting to carry her off by violence ?

Nor has he yet given over his machinations.

For, as the Captain proceeds, ' Mr. John Har-
lowe owned to him (but in confidence, that his ne-
phew is at this time busied in endeavouring to find
out where we are ; being assured, as I am not to be
heard of at any of my relations, or at my usual
lodgings, that we are together. And that we are
not married, is plain, as he will have it, from
Mr. Hickman's application so lately made to her
uncle ;

uncle; and which was seconded by Mrs. Norton to her mother. And he cannot bear, that I should enjoy such a triumph unmolested.'

A profound sigh, and the handkerchief again lifted to the eye. But did not the sweet soul deserve this turn upon her, for the felonious intention to rob me of herself?

I read on to the following effect:

' Why (Mr. Harlowe asked) was it said to his other inquiring friend, that we *were* married; and that by his niece's woman, who ought to know; Who could give *convincing* reasons, no doubt?—

Here again she wept, took a turn across the room; then returned—Read on, said she—

Will you, my dearest life, read it yourself;

I will take the letter with me, by-and-by—I cannot *see to* read it just now, wiping her eyes—Read on—Let me hear it all—that I may know your sentiments upon this letter, as well as give my own.

' The Captain then told uncle John the reasons that induced me to give out that we were married; and the Conditions on which my Beloved was brought to countenance it; which had kept us at the most punetilious distance.

' But still my character was insisted upon. And Mr. Harlowe went away dissatisfied. And the Captain was also so much concerned, that he cared not to write what the result of this first conference was.

' But in the next, which was held on receipt of the draughts, at his the Captain's house (as the former was for the greater secrecy), when the old gentleman had read them, and had the Captain's opinion, he was much better pleased. And yet he declared, that it would not be easy to persuade any other person of his family to believe so favourably of the matter, as he was *now* willing to be-

lieve, were they to know, that we had lived so long together unmarried.

‘ And then the Captain says, his dear friend made a proposal:—It was this—That we should marry out of hand, but as privately as possible, as indeed he found we intended (for he could have no objection to the draughts)—But yet he expected to have present one trusty friend of his own, for his better satisfaction.’

Here I stopt, with a design to be angry—But she desiring me to read on, I obeyed.—

‘ But that it should pass to every one living, except to that trusty person, to himself, and to the Captain, that we were married from the time that we had lived together in one house; and that this time should be made to agree with that of Mr. Hickman’s application to him from Miss Horve.’

This my dearest life, said I, is a very considerate proposal. We have nothing to do, but to caution the people below properly on this head. I did not think your uncle Harlowe capable of such an expedient. But you see how much his heart is in the reconciliation.

This was the return I met with—You have always, as a mark of your politeness, let me know, how meanly you think of every one of my family.

Yet, thou wilt think, Belford, that I could forgive her for the reproach.

‘ The Captain does not know, he says, how this proposal will be relished by us. But, for his part, he thinks it an expedient that will obviate many difficulties, and may possibly put an end to Mr. James Harlowe’s further designs: And on this account he has, by the uncle’s advice, already declared to two several persons, by whose means it may come to that young gentleman’s ears, that he (Captain Tomlinson) has very great reason to be

lieve,

lieve, that we were married soon after Mr. Hick-
man's application was rejected.

‘ And this, Mr. Lovelace (says the Captain), will enable you to pay a compliment to the family, that will not be unsuitable to the generosity of some of the declarations you was pleased to make to the Lady before me (and which Mr. John Harlowe may make some advantage of in favour of a reconciliation); in that you have not demanded your lady's estate so soon as you were intitled to make the demand.’ An excellent contrivance surely she must think this worthy Mr. Tomlinson to be!

‘ But the Captain adds, that if either the Lady or I disapprove of the report of our marriage, he will retract it. Nevertheless he must tell me, that Mr. John Harlowe is very much set upon this way of proceeding; as the only one in his opinion, capable of being improved into a general reconciliation. But if we do not acquiesce in it, he beseeches my fair one not to suspend my day, that he may be authorised in what he says, as to the truth of the main fact [How conscientious this good man!]: Nor must it be expected, he says, that her uncle will take one step towards the willied-for reconciliation, till the *solemnity is actually over.*

He adds, ‘ that he shall be very soon in town on other affairs; and then proposes to attend us, and give us a more particular account of all that passed, or shall further pass, between Mr. Harlowe and him.’

Well, my dearest life; what say you to your uncle's expedient? Shall I write to the Captain, and acquaint him, that we have no objection to it?

She was silent for a few minutes. At last, with a sigh—See, Mr. Lovelace, said she, what you have brought me to, by treading after you in such crooked paths!—See what disgrace I have incurred!—Indeed you have not acted like a wise man.

My beloved creature, do you not remember, how earnestly I besought the honour of your hand before we came to town?—Had I been *then* favoured—

Well, well, Sir—There has been much amiss somewhere; that's all I will say at present. And since what's past cannot be recalled, my uncle must be obeyed, I think.

Charmingly dutiful!—I had nothing then to do, that I might not be behind-hand with the worthy Captain and her uncle, but to press for the day. This I fervently did. But (as I might have expected) her former answer was repeated; That when the settlements were completed; when the licence was actually obtained; it would be time enough to name the day: And, O, Mr. Lovelace, said she, turning from me with a grace inimitable tender, her handkerchief at her eyes, what a happiness, if my dear uncle could be prevailed upon to be personally a father, on this occasion, to *the poor fatherless girl*.

What's the matter with me!—Whence this dew-drop!—A tear!—As I hope to be saved, it is a tear, Jack!—Very ready methinks!—Only on reciting!—But her lively image was before me, in the very attitude she spoke the words—And indeed at the time she spoke them, these lines of Shakespear came into my head.

Thy heart is big. Get thee apart, and weep!
Passion, I see is catching:—For my eyes,
Seeing those beads of sorrow stand in thine,
Begin to water—

I withdrew, and wrote to the Captain to the following effect—‘ That he would be so good as to acquaint his dear friend, that we intirely acquiesced with what he had proposed; and had already properly cauicned the gentlewomen of the house, and their servants, as well as our own: That if he

‘ would

‘ would in person give me the blessing of his dear niece’s hand, it would crown the wishes of both : ‘ That his own day, in this case, as I presumed it would be a short one, should be ours : That by this means the secret would be in a fewer hands : ‘ That I myself thought the ceremony could not be too privately performed ; and this not only for the sake of the wife and he had intended to be answered by it, but because I would not have Lord M. think himself slighted ; as he had once intended (as I had told him) to be our nuptial father, had we not declined his offer, in order to avoid a public wedding ; which his beloved niece would not come into, while she was in disgrace with her friends. — But that, if he chose not to do us this honour, I wished that Captain Tomlinson might be the trusty person, whom he would have to be present on the happy occasion.’

I shewed this letter to my fair one. She was not displeased with it. So, Jack, we cannot now move too fast, as to Settlements and License : The day is her Uncle’s day, or Captain Tomlinson’s perhaps as shall best suit the occasion. Miss Howe’s smuggling scheme is now surely provided against in all events.

But I will not by anticipation make thee a judge of all the benefits that may flow from this my elaborate contrivance. Why will these girls pat me upon my master-strokes ?

And now for a little mine which I am getting ready to spring. The first, and at the rate I go on [now a resolution, and now a remorse], perhaps the last.

A little mine, I call it. But it may be attended with great effects. I shall not, however, absolutely depend upon the success of it, having much more effectual ones in reserve. And yet great engines are often moved by little springs. A small spark falling by accident into a powder-magazine, has sometimes

times

times done more execution, than an hundred cannon.

Come, the worst to the worst, the *hymeneal torch*, and a *white sheet*, must be my *amende honorable*, as the French have it.

LETTER. XLVII.

Mr. BELFORD, To ROBERT LOVELACE, Esq;

Tuesday, June 6.

UNCUCESSFUL as hitherto my application to thee has been, I cannot for the heart of me forbear writing once more in behalf of this admirable woman; and yet am unable to account for the zeal which impels me to take her part with an earnestness so sincere.

But all her merit thou acknowledgest; all thy own vileness thou confessest, and even gloriest in it; what hope then of moving so harden'd a man?—Yet, as it is not too late, and thou art nevertheless upon the crisis, I am resolved to try what another letter will do. It is but my writing in vain, if it do no good; and if thou wilt let me prevail, I know thou wilt hereafter think me richly intitled to thy thanks.

To *argue* with thee would be folly. The case cannot require it. I will only *intreat* thee, therefore, that thou wilt not let such an excellence lose the reward of her vigilant virtue.

I believe, there never were libertines so vile, but purposed, at some future period of their lives, to set about reforming; and let me begg of thee, that thou wilt, in this great article, make thy future repentance as easy, as some time hence thou wilt wish thou *hadst* made it. If thou proceedest, I have no doubt, that this affair will end tragically, one way or other. It must. Such a woman must interest both gods and men in her cause. But what I most apprehend, is, that with her own hand, in resentment

of the perpetrated outrage, she (like another Lucretia) will assert the purity of her heart: Or, if her piety preserve her from this violence, that wasting grief will soon put a period to her days. And in either case will not the remembrance of thy *ever-during* guilt, and *transitory* triumph, be a torment of torments to thee?

'Tis a seriously sad thing, after all, that so fine a creature should have fallen into such vile and remorseless hands: For, from thy cradle, as I have heard thee own, thou ever delightedst to sport with and torment the animal, whether bird or beast, that thou lovest and hadst a power over.

How different is the case of this fine woman from that of any other whom thou hast seduced! I need not mention to thee, nor insist upon the striking difference: Justice, gratitude, thy interest, thy vows, all engaging thee; and thou certainly loving her, as far as thou art capable of love, above all her sex. She not to be drawn aside by art, or to be made to suffer from credulity, nor for want of wit and discernment (that will be another cutting reflection to so fine a mind as hers): The contention between you only unequal, as it is between naked innocence and armed guilt. In every thing else as thou ownest, her talents greatly superior to thine!—What a fate will hers be, if thou art not at last overcome by thy reiterated remorses!

At first, indeed, when I was admitted into her presence, and (till I observed her meaning air, and heard her speak), I supposed that she had no very uncommon judgment to boast of: For I made, as I thought, but *just* allowances for her blossoming youth, and for that loveliness of person, and easiness of dress, which I imagined must have taken up half her time and study to cultivate; and yet I had been prepared by thee to entertain a very high opinion of her

her sense and her reading. Her choice of this gay fellow, upon such hazardous terms (thought I), is a confirmation that her wit wants that maturity which only years and experience can give it. Her knowledge (argued I to myself) must be all theory; and the complaisance ever comforting with an age so green and so gay, will make so inexperienced a lady at least forbear to shew herself disguised at freedoms of discourse, in which those present of her own sex, and some of ours (so learned, so well read, and so travelled), allow themselves.

In this presumption, I run on; and, having the advantage, as I conceited, of all the company but thee, and being desirous to appear in her eyes a mighty clever fellow, I thought I shewed away, when I said any foolish things that had more sound than sense in them; and when I made silly jests, which attracted the smiles of thy Sinclair, and the spacious Partington; and that Miss Harlowe did not smile too, I thought was owing to her youth or affection, or to a mixture of both, perhaps to a greater command of her features. Little dreamt I, that I was incurring her contempt all the time.

But when, as I said, I heard her speak; which she did not till she had fathomed us all; when I heard her sentiments on two or three subjects, and took notice of that searching eye, darting into the very inmost cells of our frothy brains, by my faith, it made me look about me; and I began to recollect, and be ashamed of all I had said before; in short, was resolved to sit silent, till every one had talked round, to keep my folly in countenance. And then I raised the subjects that she could join in, and which she did join in, so much to the confusion and surprize of every one of us! For even thou, Lovelace, so noted for smart wit, repartee, and a vein of raillery, that de-

lighteth all who come near thee, sattest in palpable darkness, and lookedst about thee, as well as we.

One instance only, of this, shall I remind thee of?

We talked of *wit*, and of *wit*, and aimed at it, bandying it like a ball from one to another of us, and resting it chiefly with thee, who wert always proud enough and vain enough of the attribute; and then more especially, as thou hadst assembled us, as far as I know, principally to shew the lady thy superiority over us; and us thy triumph over her. And then Tourville (who is always satisfied with wit at second-hand; wit upon memory; other men's wit), repeated some verses, as applicable to the subject; which two of us applauded, tho' full of double entendre. Thou, seeing the lady's serious air on one of those repetitions, appliedst thyself to her, desiring her notions, of wit: a quality, thou saidst, which every one prized, whether flowing from himself, or found in another.

Then it was she took all our attention:—It was a quality much talked of, she said, but, she believed, very little understood:—At least if she might be so free as to give her judgment of it, from what had passed in the present conversation, she must say that, Wit with Gentlemen was one thing; with Ladies, another.

This startled us all:—How the women looked!—How they pursed in their mouths, a broad smile the moment before upon each, from the verses they had heard repeated, so well understood, as we saw, by their looks—While I besought her to let us know, for our instruction, what Wit was with *Ladies*: For such I was sure it ought to be with *Gentlemen*.

Cowley, she said, had defined it prettily by negatives.

Thou desiredst her to repeat his definition.

She

She did ; and with so much graceful ease, and beauty, and propriety of accent, as would have made bad poetry delightful.

*A thousand diff'rent shapes it bears,
Comely, in thousand shapes appears.*

'Tis not a tale : 'Tis not a jest,

*Admir'd, with laughter, at a feast,
Nor florid talk, which must this title gain.*

The proofs of wit for ever must remain.

Much less can that have any place

At which a virgin hides her face.

*Such dross the fire must purge away : — 'Tis just
The author blush there, where the reader must.*

Here she stopt, looking round her upon us all with conscious superiority, as I thought. Lord ! how we star'd ! Thou attemptest to give ns thy definition of wit, that thou mightest have something to say, and not seem to be surprised into silent modesty.

But, as if she cared not to trust thee with the subject, referring to the same author as for his more positive decision, she thus, with the same harmony of voice and accent, emphatically decided upon it.

Wit, like a luxuriant vine,

Unless to Virtue's prop it join,

Firm and erect, tow'r'd heaven bound

*Tho' it with beauteous leaves and pleasant fruit be
crown'd ;*

It lies deform'd, and rotting on the ground.

If thou recollectest this part of the conversation, and how like fools we looked at one another : How much it puts us out of conceit with ourselves, and made us fear her ; when we found our conversation thus excluded from the very character which our vanity had made us think unquestionably ours : And if thou profitest properly by the recollection, thou wilt be

be of my mind, that there is not so much wit in wickedness, as we had flattered ourselves there was.

And after all, I have been of opinion ever since that conversation, that the wit of all the rakes and libertines I ever conversed with, from the brilliant Bob Lovelace down to little Johnny Hartop the punster, consists mostly in saying bold and shocking things, with such courage, as shall make modest people blush, the Impudent laugh, and the Ignorant stare.

And why dost thou think I mention these things, so mal-a-propos, as it may seem?—Only, let me tell thee, as an instance, among many that might be given from the same evening's conversation, of this fine lady's superiority in those talents which enoble nature, and dignify her sex; Evidenced not only to each of us, as we offended, but to the flippant Partington, and the grosser, but egregiously hypocritical Sinclair, in the correcting eye, the discouraging blush in which was mixed as much pleasure as modesty; and sometimes, as the occasion called for it (for we were some of us hardened above the sense of feeling *delicate reproof*), by the sovereign contempt, mingled with a disdainful kind of pity, that shewed, at once, her own conscious worth, and our despicable worthlessness.

O Lovelace! what then was the triumph, even in my eye, and what is it still upon reflection, of true modesty, of *true* wit, and *true* politeness, over frothy jest, laughing impertinence, and an obscenity so shameful, even to the guilty, that they cannot hint at it but under a double meaning!

Then, as thou hast somewhere observed, all her correctives *avowed* by her eye. Not poorly, like the generality of her sex, affecting ignorance of meanings too obvious to be concealed; but so resenting, as to shew each impudent laughter, the offence given to, and

and taken by a purity, that had mistaken its way, when it fell into such company.

Such is the woman, such is the angel, whom thou hast betrayed into thy power, and wouldst deceive and ruin.—Sweet creature! Did she but know, how she is surrounded (as I then thought as well as now think), and what is *intended*, how much sooner would death be her choice, than so dreadful a situation!—And how effectually would her story, were it generally known, warn all the sex against throwing themselves into the power of ours, let our vows, oaths, and protestations, be what they will!

But let me beg of thee, once more, my dear Lovelace, if thou hast any regard for thy honour, for the honour of thy family, for thy future peace, or for my opinion of thee (who yet pretend not to be so much moved by principle, as by that dazzling merit, which ought still more to attract thee), to be prevailed upon—to be—to be *humane* that's all—Only, that thou would not disgrace our common humanity!

Hardened as thou art, I know, that they are the abandoned people in the house who keep thee up to a resolution against her. O that the sagacious fair one, with so much innocent charity in her own heart, had not so resolutely held those women at distance!—That, as she boarded there, she had oftner tabled with them. Specious as they are, in a week's time, she would have seen thro' them; they could not have been always so guarded, as they were when they saw her but seldom, and when they prepared themselves to see her; and she would have fled their house as a place infected. And yet, perhaps, with so determined an enterprizer, this discovery might have accelerated her ruin.

I know that thou art nice in thy loves. But are there not hundreds of women, who, tho' not utterly abandoned, would be taken with thee for mere *per-*
nal

nal regards? Make a toy, if thou wilt, of principle, with regard to such of the Sex as regard it as a toy; but rob not an angel of those purities, which, in her own opinion, constitute the difference between angelic and brutal qualities.

With regard to the passion itself, the less of soul in either man or woman, the more sensual are they. Thou, Lovelace, hast a soul, tho' a corrupted one; and art more intent (as thou even gloriest) upon the preparative stratagem, than upon the end of conquering.

See we not the natural bent of idiots and the crazed?—The very appetite is *body*; and when we ourselves are most fools, and crazed, then are we most eager in these pursuits. See what fools this passion makes the wisest men! What snivellers, what dotards, when they suffer themselves to be run away with by it!—An *unpermanent passion*!—Since, if (ashamed of its *more proper name*) we must call it *Love*, *Love gratified, is Love satisfied*—*And Love satisfied, is Indifference begun*. And this is the case where *consent* on one side adds to the obligation on the other. What then but remorse can follow a forcible attempt;

Do not even chaste lovers choose to be alone in their courtship preparations, ashamed to have even a child to witness to their foolish actions, and more foolish expressions;—Is this diefied passion in its greatest altitudes, fitted to stand the day;—Do not the lovers, when mutual consent awaits their wills, retire to coverts and to darkness, to complete their wishes? And shall such a sneaking passion as this, which can be so easily gratified by viler objects, be permitted to debase the noblest?

Were not the delays of thy vile purposes owing more to the awe which her majestic virtue has inspired thee with, than to thy want of adroitness in villainy

villainy [I *must* write my free sentiments in this case; for have I not *seen* the angel?]; I should be ready to censure some of thy contrivances and pretences to suspend the expected day, as *trite*, *stale*, and (to me who know thy intention) *poor*; and too often resorted to, as nothing comes of them, to be gloried in; particularly that of Mennell, the vapourish lady, and the ready-furnished house.

She must have thought so too, at times, and in her heart despised thee for them, or love thee (ingrateful as thou art) to her misfortune; as well as entertain hope against probability. But this would afford another warning to the Sex, were they to know her story; as it would shew them what poor pretences they *must seem* to be satisfied with, if once they put themselves into the power of a designing man.

If *trial* only was thy end, as once was thy pretence enough surely hast thou tried this paragon of virtue and vigilance. But I knew thee too well, to expect, at the time, that thou wouldest stop there. Men of our cast, whenever they form a design upon any of the Sex, put no other bound to their views, than what want of power gives them. I knew, that from one advantage gained, thou wouldest proceed to attempt another. Thy habitual aversion to wedlock too well I knew; and indeed thou avowest thy hope to bring her to *cohabitation*, in that very letter in which thou pretendst *trial* to be thy principal view.

But do not even thy own frequent and involuntary remorses, when thou hast time, place, company, and every other circumstances, to favour thee in thy wicked design, convince thee, that there can be no room for a hope so presumptuous?—Why then, since thou wouldest choose to marry her, rather than lose her, wilt thou make her hate thee for ever?

But

But if thou darest to meditate *personal* trial, and art sincere in thy resolution to reward her, as she behaves in it, let me beseech thee to remove her from this vile house: That will be to give her and thy conscience fair play. So entirely now does the sweet deluded excellence depend upon her supposed happier prospects that thou needest not to fear that she will fly from thee, or that she will wish to have recourse to that scheme of Miss Howe, which has put thee upon what thou callest thy *master-strokes*.

But whatever by thy determination on this head; and if I write not in time, but that thou hast actually pulled off the mask; let it not be one of thy devices, if thou wouldest avoid the curses of every heart, and hereafter of thy own, to give her, no not for one hour (be her resentment ever so great,) into the power of that villainous woman, who has, if possible, less remorse than thyself; and whose *trade* it is to break the resisting spirit, and utterly to ruin the heart unpractised in evil.—O Lovelace, Lovelace, how many dreadful stories could this horrid woman tell the Sex! And shall that of Miss Clarissa Harlowe swell the guilty list?

But this I might have spared. Of this, devil as thou art, thou canst not be capable. Thou couldst not enjoy a triumph so disgraceful to thy wicked pride, as well as to humanity.

Shouldst thou think, that the melancholy spectacle hourly before me has made me more serious than usual, perhaps thou wilt not be mistaken. But nothing more is to be inferr'd from hence (were I even to return to my former courses), but that whenever the time of cool reflection comes, whether brought on by our own disasters, or by those of others, we shall undoubtedly, if capable of thought, and if we have time for it, think in the same manner.

We

We neither of us are such fools, as to disbelieve a futurity, or to think, whatever be our practice, that we came hither by chance, and for no end but to do all the mischief that we have in our power to do.—Nor am I ashamed to own, that in the prayers which my poor uncle makes me read to him, in the absence of a very good clergyman, who regularly attends him, I do not forget to put in a word or two for myself.

If, Lovelace, thou laughest at me, thy ridicule will be more conformable to thy *actions*, than to thy belief.—*Devils believe and tremble.* Canst thou be more abandoned than they?

And here let me add, with regard to my poor old man, that I often wish thee present but for one half hour in a day, to see the dregs of a gay life, running off in the most excruciating tortures, that the cholic, the stone, and the gangrene, can unitedly inflict, and to hear him bewail the dissoluteness of his past life, in the bitterest anguish of a spirit every hour expecting to be called to its last account.—Yet, by all his confessions, he has not to accuse himself in sixty-seven years of life, of half the *very* vile enormities, which you and I have committed in the last seven only.

I conclude with recommending to thy serious consideration all I have written, as proceeding from the heart and soul of

Thy assured friend

JOHN BELFORD.

LETTER XLVIII.

MR. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Tuesday, P. M. June 6.

DIFFICULTIES still to be got over in procuring this plaguy licence. I ever hated, and ever shall hate, these spiritual lawyers, and their court.

And

And now, Jack, if I have not secured *victory*, I have a *retreat*.

But hold—Thy servant with a letter—

A confounded long one! tho' not a narrative one—Once more in behalf of the lady—Lie thee down, oddity! What canst thou write that can have force upon me at this crisis—And have I not, as I went along made thee to say all that was necessary for thee to say?

Yet once more, I'll take thee up.

Trite, stale, poor, (say'st thou) are some of my contrivances? That of the widow's particularly!—I have no patience with thee.—Had not that contrivance its effect at the time, for a procrastination?—And had I not then reason to fear, that she would find enough to make her dislike this house? And was it not right (intending what I intended) to lead her on from time to time, with a notion, that a house of her own would be ready for her soon, in order to induce her to continue here till it was?

Trite, stale, and poor!—Thou art a silly fellow, and no judge, when thou sayest this. Had I not, like a blockhead, revealed to thee, as I *went along*, the secret purposes of my heart, but had kept all in, till the event had explained my mysteries, I would have defy'd thee to have been able, any more than the lady, to have guessed at what was to befall her, till it had actually come to pass. Nor doubt I, in this case, that, instead of presuming to reflect upon her for credulity, as *loving me to her misfortune*, and for *hoping against probability*, thou wouldst have been readier by far, to censure her for nicety and overscrupulousness. And let me tell thee, that had she loved me, as I wished her to love me, she could not possibly have

have been so very apprehensive of my designs, nor so ready to be influenced by Miss Howe's precautions, as she has always been, altho' my general character made not for me with her.

But in thy opinion, I suffer for that simplicity in my contrivances, which is their principal excellence. No machinery make I necessary. No unnatural flights aim I at. All pure nature, taking advantage of nature, as nature tends; and so simple my devices, that when they are known, thou, even thou, imaginest, thou couldest have thought of the same. And indeed thou seemest to *own*, that the slight thou puttest up on them, is owing to my letting thee into them beforehand; undistinguishing, as well as ingrateful as thou art!

Yet, after all, I would not have thee think, that I do not know my weak places. I have formerly told thee, that it is difficult for the ablest general to say what he *will* do, or what he *can* do, when he is obliged to regulate his motions by those of a watchful enemy. If thou givest due weight to this consideration, thou wilt not wonder that I should make many marches and countermarches, some of which may appear to a slight observer unnecessary.

But let me cursorily enter into this debate with thee on this subject, now I am within sight of my journey's end.

Abundance of impertinent things thou tellest me in this letter; some of which thou hadst from myself; others that I knew before.

All that thou sayest in this charming creature's praise, is short of what I have said and written, on this inexhaustible subject.

Her virtue, her resistance, which are her merits, are my *stimulatives*. Have I not told thee so twenty times over?

Devil,

Devil, as these girls between them call me, what of devil am I, but in my *contrivances*? I am not more a devil than others, in the *end* I aim at; for when I have carried my point, it is still but *one* seduction. And I have perhaps been spared the guilt of many seductions in the time.

What of uncommon would there be in this case, but for her watchfulness?—As well as I love intrigue and stratagem, dost think, that I had not rather have gained my end with less trouble and less guilt?

The man, let me tell thee, who is as wicked as he *can* be, is a worse man than I am. Let me ask any Rake in England, if resolving to carry his point he would have been so long about it? or have had so much compunction as I have had?

Were every Rake, nay, were every Man to sit down, as I do, and write all that enters into his head or into his heart, and to accuse himself with equal freedom and truth, what an army of miscreants should I have to keep me in countenance?

It is a maxim with some, that if they are left alone with a woman, and make not an attempt upon her, she will think herself affronted.—Are not such men as these worse than I am?—What an opinion must they have of the whole Sex?

Let me defend the Sex I so dearly love.—If these elder brethren of ours think they have general reason for their assertion, they must have kept very bad company, or must judge of womens hearts by their own. She must be an abandoned woman, who will not shrink as a snail into its shell, at a gross and sudden attempt. A modest woman must be naturally cold, reserved, and shy. She cannot be so much, and so soon affected, as libertines are apt to imagine; and must, at least, have some confidence in the honour and silence of a man, before desire can possibly put forthin her, to encourage and meet his flame.

For my own part, I have been always decent in the company of women till I was sure of them. Nor have I ever offered a great offence, till I have found little ones passed over; and that they shunn'd me not, when they knew my character.

My divine Clarissa has puzzled me, and beat me out of my plea: At one time, I hoped to overcome by intimidating her, at another by *Love*: by the amorous *See-saw*, as I have called it. And I have only now to join surprize to the other two, and see what can be done by all three.

And whose property, I pray thee shall I invade, if I pursue my schemes of love and vengeance?—Have not those who have a right in her, renounced that right?—Have they not wilfully exposed her to dangers?—Yet must know, that such a woman would be considered as lawful prize, by as many as could have the opportunity to attempt her?—And had they not thus cruelly exposed her, is she not a *single woman*? And need I tell thee, Jack, that men of our cast, the *best* of them [the *worst* stick at nothing] think it a great grace and favour done to the married men, if they leave them their wives to themselves; and compound for their sisters, daughters, wards, and nieces?—Shocking as these principles must be to a reflecting mind; yet such thou knowest are the principles of thousands (who would not act by the Sex as I have acted by them, when in my power); and as often carried into practice, as their opportunities or courage will permit.—Such therefore have no right to blame me.

Thou repeatedly pleadest her sufferings from her family. But I have too often answered this plea, to need to say any more now, than that she has not suffered for *my sake*. For has she not been made the victim of the malice of her rapacious brother and envious sister, who only waited for an occasion to ruin her

her with her other relations ; and took this as the first, to drive her out of the house ; and, as it happen'd, into my arms ?—Thou knowest how much against her inclination.

As for her own sins, how many has the dear creature to answer for to *Love* and to *me* !—Twenty, and twenty times twenty, has she not told me, that she refused not the odious Solmes in favour to me ? And as often has she not offered to renounce me for the single life, if the Implacables would have received her on that condition ?—What repetitions does thy weak pity make me guilty of ?

To look a little farther back : Canst thou forget what my sufferings were from this haughty beauty, in the whole time of my attendance upon her proud motions, in the purlieus of Harlowe-Place, and at the little White Hart at Neale, as we call it ?—Did I not threaten vengeance upon her then (and had I not reason ?) for disappointing me [I will give but this one instance] of a promised interview ?

O Jack ! what a night had I of it, in the bleak coppice adjoining to her father's paddock !—My linen and wig frozen ; my limbs absolutely numbed ; my fingers only sensible of so much warmth, as enabled me to hold a pen ; and that obtained by rubbing the skin off, and beating with my hands my shivering sides.—Kneeling on the hoar moss on one knee, writing on the other, if the stiff scrawl could be called writing.—My feet by the time I had done, seeming to have taken root, and actually unable to support me for some minutes !—Love and Rage kept then my heart in motion (and only Love and Rage could do it), or how much more than I *did* suffer, must I have suffered ?

I told thee, at my melancholy return, what were the contents of the letter I wrote. And I shewed thee afterwards, her tyrannical answer to it. 'Thou

then, Jack, lovedst thy friend ; and pitiedst thy poor suffering Lovelace. Even the affronted God of Love approved then of my threatened vengeance against the fair promiser ; tho' now with thee, in the day of my power, forgetful of the night of my sufferings, he is become an advocate for her.

Nay, was it not he himself that brought to me my adorable *Nemesis* ; and both together put me upon this very vow, ‘ That I would never rest, till I had drawn in this goddess-daughter of the Harlowes, to cohabit with me : and that in the face of all their proud family ?’—Nor canst thou forget this vow.—At this instant I have thee before me, as then thou sorrowfully lookedst.

Thy strong features glowing with compassion for me ; thy lips twisted ; thy forehead furrowed ; thy whole face drawn out from the stupid round into the ghastly oval ; every muscle contributing its power to complete the aspect grievous ; and not one word couldst thou utter, but *Amen* to my vow.

And what of distinguishing love, or favour, or confidence, have I had from her since, to make me forego this vow ?

I renewed it not, indeed, afterwards ; and actually for a long season, was willing to forget it ; till repetitions of the same faults revived the remembrance of the former.—And now adding to those, the contents of some of Miss Howe’s virulent letters, so lately come at, what canst thou say for the rebel, consistent with thy loyalty to thy friend ?

Every man to his genius and constitution. Hannibal was called *The father of warlike stratagems*. Had Hannibal been a private man, and turned his plotting head against the *other sex* ; or had I been a general, and turned mine against such of my fellow-creatures of *my own*, as I thought myself intitled to consider as my enemies, because they were born and

lived

lived in a different climate;—Hannibal would have done less mischief;—Lovelace more.—That would have been the difference.

Not a sovereign on earth, if he be not a *good man*, and if he be of a warlike temper, but must do a thousand times more mischief than me. And why? Because he has it in his *power* to do more.

An honest man, perhaps thou'l say, will not wish to have it in his power to do hurt. *He ought not*, let me tell him: For, if he have it, a thousand to one but it makes him both wanton and wicked.

In what, then, am I so *singularly vile*?

In my *contrivances*, thou'l say (for thou art my echo), if not in my proposed *end* of them.

How difficult does every man find it, as well as me, to forego a predominant passion? I have three passions that sway me by turns; all imperial ones; Love, Revenge, Ambition, or a desire of conquest.

As to this particular contrivance of Tomlinson and the Uncle, which thou'l think a black one perhaps; that had been spared, had not these *innocent* ladies put me upon finding a husband for their Mrs. Townfend: That device, therefore, is but a *preventive* one. Thinkest thou, that I could bear to be outwitted? And may not this very contrivance save a world of mischief? For, dost thou think, I would have tamely given up the lady to Townfend's Tars?

What meanest thou, except to overthrow thy own plea, when thou sayest, *that men of our cast know no other bound to their wickedness, but want of power*; yet knowest this lady to be in mine?

Enough, sayest thou, *have I tried this paragon of virtue*. Not so; for I have not tried her at all.—All I have been doing, is but preparation to a trial.

But thou art concerned for the *means* that I may have a recourse to in the *trial*, and for my *veracity*.

Silly fellow!—Did ever any man, thinkest thou, deceive a girl, but at the expence of his veracity? How otherwise, can he be said to *deceive*?

As to the *means*, thou dost not imagine, that I expect a *direct* consent.—My main hope is but in a yielding reluctance; without which I will be sworn, whatever rapes have been attempted, none ever were committed, one person to one person. And good Queen Bess of England, had she been living, and appealed to, would have declared herself of my mind.

It would not be amiss for the Sex to know, what our opinions are upon this subject—I love to warn them—I wish no man to succeed with them but myself. I told thee once, that *tho' a rake, I am not a rake's friend,*

Thou sayest, that I ever hated wedlock. And true thou sayest. And yet as true, when thou tellst me, that I *would rather marry than lose this lady.* And *with she detest me for ever,* thinkest thou, if I try her, and succeed not?—Take care—Take care, Jack!—Seest thou not, that thou warnest me, that I do not try, without resoving to conquer?

I must add, that I have for some time been convinced, that I have done wrong, to scribble to thee so freely as I have done (and the more so, if I make the Lady legally mine); for has not every letter I have written to thee, been a bill of indictment against myself? I may partly curse my vanity for it; and I think I will refrain for the future; for thou art really very impertinent.

A good man, I own, might urge many of the things thou urggest; but, by my soul, they come very awkwardly from thee. And thou must be sensible, that I can answer every title of what thou writest, upon the foot of the *maxims we have long held and pursued.*—By the specimen above, thou wilt see that I can.

And

And pr'ythee tell me, Jack, what but this that follows would have been the epitome of mine and my beloved's story, *after ten years cohabitation*; had I never written to thee upon the subject, and had I not been my own accuser?

' Robert Lovelace, a notorious woman-hater, makes his addresses in an honourable way to Miss Clarissa Harlowe; a young lady of the highest merit.—Fortunes on both sides out of the question.

' After encouragement given, he is insulted by her violent brother; who thinks it his interest to discountenance the match; and who at last challenging him, is obliged to take his worthless life at his hands.

' The family, as much enraged, as if he had *taken* the life he *gave*, insult him personally, and find out an odious lover for the young lady.

' To avoid a forced marriage, she is prevailed upon to throw herself into Mr. Lovelace's protection.

' Yet, disclaiming any passion for him, she repeatedly offers to renounce him for ever, if, on that condition, her relations will receive her, and free her from the address of the hated lover.

' Mr. Lovelace, a man of strong passions, and, as some say, of great pride, thinks himself under very little obligation to her on this account; and not being naturally fond of marriage, and having so much reason to hate her relations, endeavours to prevail upon her to live with him, what he calls *the life of honour*: And at last, by stratagem, art, and contrivance, prevails.

' He resolves never to marry any other woman: Takes a pride to have her called by his name: A Church-rite all the difference between them: Treats her with deserved tenderness. Nobody questions their marriage but these proud relations of hers, whom he wishes to question it. Every year a

‘ charming boy. Fortunes to support the increasing family with splendor—A tender father. Always a warm friend; a generous landlord, and a punctual pay-master—Now-and-then, however, perhaps, indulging with a new object, in order to bring him back with greater delight to his charming Clarissa—His only fault Love of the Sex—Which nevertheless, the women say, will cure itself—Defensible thus far, that he breaks no contracts by his rovings—

And what is there so very greatly amiss, as the world goes, in all this?—

Let me aver, that there are thousands and ten thousands, who have worse stories to tell than this would appear to be, had I not interested thee in the progress to my great end. And besides, thou knowest that the character I gave myself to Joseph Leman, as to my treatment of my mistresses, is pretty near the truth.

Were I to be as much in earnest in my defence, as thou art warm in my arraignment, I could convince thee, by other arguments, observations, and comparisons [*Is not all human good and evil comparative?*] that tho' from my ingenuous temper (writing only to thee, who art master of every secret of my heart) I am so ready to accuse myself in my narrations; yet I have something to say *for myself to myself*, as I go along; tho' no one else, perhaps, that was not a rake, would allow any weight to it.—And this caution might I give to thousands, who would stoop for a stone to throw at me: ‘ See that your own *predominant passions*, whatever they be, hurry you not into as much wickedness, as *mine* do *me*.—See, if ye happen to be better than me, in some things, that ye are not worse in others; and in points too, that may be of more extensive bad consequence, than that of seducing a girl, (and taking care of her afterwards), who from her cradle is armed with

‘ *cautions*

'cautions against the delusions of men.' And yet I am not so partial to my own faults, as to think lightly of *that*, when I allow myself to think.

Another grave thing will I add, now my hand's in: 'So dearly do I love the sex, that had I found, that a character for virtue had been generally necessary to recommend me to them, I should have had a much greater regard to my morals, as to the sex, than I have had.'

To sum up all—I am sufficiently apprized, that men of worthy and honest hearts, who never allowed themselves in *premeditated* evil, and who take into the account the excellencies of this fine creature, will, and must, not only condemn, but *abhor* me, were they to know as much of me as thou dost.—But, methinks, I would be glad to escape the censure of those men, and of those women too, who have never known what capital trials and temptations are; who have no genius for enterprize; and most particularly of those, who have only kept their secret better than I have kept, or wished to keep, mine.

I THREATENED above to refrain writing to thee. But take it not to heart, Jack—I must write on, and cannot help it.

LETTER XLIX.

Mr. LOVELACE To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Wednesday, Night, 11 o'Clock.

FAITH, Jack, thou hadst half undone me with thy nonsense, tho' I would not own it in my yesterday's letter; my conscience of thy party before. But I think I am my own man again.

So near to execution my plot ! So near springing my mine ! All agreed upon between the women and me, or I believe thou hadst overthrown me.

I have time for a few lines preparative to what is to happen in an hour or two ; and I love to write to the moment.—

We have been extremely happy. How many agreeable days have we known together ! What may the next two hours produce !—

When I parted with my charmer (which I did with infinite reluctance, half an hour ago), it was upon her promise, that she would not fit up to write or read. For so engaging was the conversation to me (and, indeed, my behaviour throughout the whole of it, was confessedly agreeable to her), that I insisted, if she did not directly retire to rest, that she should add another happy hour to the former.

To have sat up writing or reading half the night, as she sometimes does, would have frustrated my view, as thou wilt observe, when my little plot unravels.

WHAT—What—What now !—bounding villain ! wouldst thou choak me !—

I was speaking to my heart, Jack !—It was then at my throat.—And what is all this for ?—These shy ladies, how, when a man thinks himself near the mark, do they tempest him !—

Is all ready, Dorcas ? Has my beloved kept her word with me ?—Whether are these billowy heavings owing more to Love or to Fear ? I cannot tell for the soul of me, which I have most of. If I can but take her before her apprehension, before her eloquence, is awake—

Limbs, why thus convulsed !—Knees, till now so firmly knit, why thus relaxed ? Why beat ye thus together ?

together? Will not these trembling fingers, which twice have refused to direct the pen, and thus curvily deform the paper, fail me in the arduous moment?

Once again, Why and for what all these convulsions? This project is not to end in matrimony surely?

But the consequences must be greater than I had thought of till this moment—My beloved's destiny or my own may depend upon the issue of the two next hours!—

I will recede, I think—

SOFT, O virgin saint; and safe as soft, be thy slumbers!—

I will now once more turn to my friend Belford's letter. 'Thou shalt have fair play, my charmer. I'll re-peruse what thy advocate has to say for thee.—Weak arguments will do, in the frame I am in!

BUT what's the matter!—What's the matter!—What a *double*—But the uproar abates!—What a *double coward* am I?—Or is it that I am taken in a cowardly minute? for heroes have their fits of *fear*; cowards their *brave* moments: And virtuous ladies, all but my Clarissa, their moment *critical*—

But thus coolly enjoying thy reflections in a hurricane—Again the confusion's renew'd!—

What! Where!—How came it!—

Is my beloved safe!—

O wake not too roughly my beloved!

LETTER L.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Thursday Morning, Five o'Clock (June 8.)

NOW is my reformation secured ; for I never shall love any other woman ! — O the is all variety ! She must be ever knew to me ! *Imagination* cannot form ; much less can the pencil paint ; nor can the soul of painting, *poetry*, describe an angel so exquisitely, so elegantly lovely ! — But I will not by anticipation pacify thy impatience. Altho' the subject is too hallowed for profane contemplation ; yet shalt thou have the whole before thee as it passed : And this not from a spirit wantoning in description upon so rich a subject ; but with a design to put a bound to thy roving thoughts. — It will be iniquity greater than a lovelace ever was guilty of, to carry them farther than I shall acknowledge.

Thus then, connecting my last with the present, lead to it.

Didst thou not, by the conclusion of my former, perceive the consternation I was in, just as I was about to re-peruse thy letter, in order to prevail upon myself to recede from my purpose of awaking in terrors my slumbering charmer ? And what dost thou think was the matter ?

I'll tell thee —

At a little after two, when the whole house was still, or seem'd to be so, and, as it proved, my Clarissa abed, and fast asleep ; I also in a manner undressed, for an hour before, and in my gown and slippers, tho', to oblige thee, writing on ; — I was alarm'd by a trampling noise over head, and a confuz'd buzz of mix'd voices, some louder than others, like scolding, and little short of screaming, all raised to vocatives,

as

as in a fright : And while I was wondering what could be the matter, down stairs ran Dorcas, and at my door, in an accent, rather frightenedly and hoarsly inward, than shrilly clamorous, cried out Fire ! Fire ! And this the more alarmed me, as she seemed to endeavour to cry out louder, but could not.

My pen (its last scrawl a benediction on my beloved) dropt from my fingers ; and up started I ; and making but three steps to the door, open'd it, and cry'd Where ! Where ! almost as much terrify'd as the wench. While she, more than half-undrest her petticoats in her hand, unable to speak distinctly, pointed up stairs.

I was there in a moment, and found allowing to the carelessness of Mrs. Sinclair's cook-maid, who, having sat up to read the simple history of Dorastus and Faunia, when she should have been in bed, had set fire to an old pair of collicoe window-curtains.

She had had the presence of mind, in her fright, to tear down the half-burnt vallens, as well as curtains, and had got them, tho' blazing, into the chimney, by the time I came up ; so that I had the satisfaction to find the danger happily over.

Mean time Dorcas, after she had directed me up stairs, not knowing the worst was over, and expecting every minute the house would be in a blaze, out of tender regard for her lady [I shall for ever love the wench for it] ran to the door, and rapping loudly at it, equal to her love, Fire ! Fire ! — The house is on Fire ! — Rise Madam ! — This instant rise if you would not be burnt in your bed !

No sooner had she made this dreadful outcry, but I heard her lady's door, with hasty violence, unbar, unbolt, unlock, and open, and my charmer's voice sounding like that of one going into a fit.

You may believe how much I was affected. I trembled with concern for her, and hastened down faster

faster than the alarm of fire had made me run up, in order to satisfy her that all the danger was over.

When I had *frown down* to her chamber-door, there I beheld the charmingest creature in the world supporting herself on the arms of the gasping Dorcas, sighing, trembling, and ready to faint, with nothing on but an under-petticoat, her lovely bosom half open, and her feet just slipt into her shoes. As soon as she saw me, she panted, and struggled to speak; but could only say, Oh, Mr. Lovelace and down was ready to sink.

I clasped her in my arms with an ardour she never felt before: My dearest life! fear nothing I have been up—The danger is over—The fire is got under—And how (foolish devil! to Dorcas) could you thus, by your hideous yell, alarm and frighten my angel!

Oh Jack! how her sweet bosom, as I clasped her to mine, heav'd and panted! I could even distinguish her dear heart flutter, flutter, flutter, against mine, and for a few minutes, I feared she would go into fits.

Lest the half lifeless charmer should catch cold in this undress, I lifted her to bed, and sat down by her upon the side of it, endeavouring with the utmost tenderness, as well of action as expression, to dissipate her terrors.

But what did I get by this my generous care of her and by my *successful* endeavour to bring her to herself?—Nothing, ungrateful as she was! but the most passionate exclamations: For we had both already forgot the occasion, dreadful as it was, which had thrown her into my arms; I, from the joy of incircling the almost disrobed body of the loveliest of her sex; she, from the greater terrors that arose from finding herself in my arms, and both seated on the bed, from which she had been so lately frightened.

Act

And now Belford, reflect upon the distance the watchful charmer had hitherto kept me at. Reflect upon my love, and upon my sufferings for her: Reflect upon her vigilance, and how long I had lain in wait to elude it; the awe I had stood in, because of her frozen virtue and over-niceness; and that I never before was so happy with her; and then think how ungovernable must be my transports in those happy moments!—And yet, in my own account, I was both decent and generous. The following lines, alter'd to the first person, come nearest of any I can recollect, to the rapturous occasion:

*Bowing, I kneel'd, and her forc'd hand I press'd
With sweet compulsion, to my beating breast;
O'er it in ecstasy my lips bent low,
And tides of sighs 'twixt her grasp'd fingers flow.
High beat my hurry'd pulse, at each fierce kiss,
And ev'ry burning sinew ak'd with bliss.*

But, far from being affected by an address so fervent, (although from a man she had so lately own'd a regard for, and with whom, but an hour or two before, she had parted with so much satisfaction), that I never saw a bitterer, or more moving grief, when she came fully to herself.

She appealed to heaven against my *treachery*, as she called it; while I, by the most solemn vows, pleaded my own equal fright, and the reality of the danger that had alarmed us both.

She conjured me, in the most solemn and affecting manner, by turns threatening and soothing, to quit her apartment, and permit her to hide herself from the light, and from every human eye.

I besought her pardon, yet could not avoid offending; and repeatedly vowed, that the next morning's sun should witness our espousals; But taking, I suppose

pose, all my protestations of this kind, as an indication, that I intended to proceed to the last extremity, she would hear nothing that I said; but, redoubling her struggles to get from me, in broken accents, and exclamations the most vehement, she protested, that she would not survive, what she called a treatment so disgraceful and villainous; and, looking all wildly round her, as if for some instrument of mischief, she espied a pair of sharp-pointed scissars on a chair by the bed-side, and endeavoured to catch them up, with design to make her words good on the spot.

Seeing her desperation, I begged her to be pacify'd; that she would hear me speak but one word, declaring that I intended no dishonour to her: And having seized the scissars, I threw them into the chimney; and she still insisting vehemently upon my distance, I permitted her to take the chair.

But, O the sweet discomposure!—Her bared shoulders and arms, so inimitably fair and lovely: Her spread hands crossed over her charming neck; yet not half concealing its glossy beauties: The scanty coat, as she rose from me, giving the whole of her admirable shape, and fine-turn'd limbs: Her eyes running over, yet seeming to threaten future vengeance: And at last her lips uttering what every indignant look, and glowing feature portended; exclaiming as if I had done the worst I could do, and vowing never to forgive me; wilt thou wonder, that I could avoid resuming the incensed, the already too much provok'd fair one?

I did; and clasped her once more to my bosom: But, considering the delicacy of her frame, her force was amazing, and shewed how much in earnest she was in her resentment; for it was with the utmost difficulty that I was able to hold her: Nor could I prevent her sliding through my arms, to fall upon her knees: Which she did at my feet: And there, in

the

the anguish of her soul, her streaming eyes lifted up to my face with supplicating softness, hands folded, dishevelled hair; for her night head-dress having fallen off in her struggling, her charming tresses fell down in naturally shining ringlets, as if officious to conceal the dazzling beauties of her neck and shoulders; her lovely bosom too heavy with sighs, and broken sobs, as if to aid her quivering lips, in pleading for her—In this manner, but when her grief gave way to her speech, in words, pronounced with that emphatical propriety, which distinguishes this admirable creature in her elocution from all the women I ever heard speak, did she implore my compassion, and my honour.

‘Consider me, *dear Lovelace*,’ were her charming words! ‘on my knees I beg you to consider me, as a poor creature who has no protector but you; who has no defence but your honour: By that Honour! By your Humanity! By all you have vow’d! I conjure you not to make me abhor myself! Not to make me vile in my own eyes!

I mentioned the morrow as the happiest day of my life.

Tell me not of to-morrow; if indeed you mean me honourably, *Now*, This very instant, **NOW!** you must shew it, and begone! You can never in a whole long life repair the evils you may **NOW** make me suffer?

Wicked wretch!—Insolent villain!—[Yes, she called me insolent villain, altho’ so much in my power! And for what?—only for kissing (with passion indeed) her inimitable neck, her lips, her cheeks, her forehead, and her streaming eyes, as this assemblage of beauties offered itself at once to my ravished sight; she continuing kneeling at my feet, as I sat].

If I am a villain, Madam—And then my grasping but trembling hand—I hope I did not hurt the tenderest

tenderest and loveliest of all her beauties—If I am a villain M adam

She tore my ruffle, shrank from my happy hand, with amazing force and agility, as with my other arm I would have incircled her waist.

Indeed you are!—The worst of villains!—Help! dear blessed people: and scream'd—No help for a poor creature!—

Am I then a villain, Madam?—Am I then a villain say you?—and clasping both my arms about her, offering to raise her to my bounding heart.—

O no!—And yet you are!—And again I was her *dear Lovelace*—Her hands again clasped over her charming bosom:—Kill me! Kill me!—If I am odious enough in your eyes, to deserve this treatment; and I will thank you!—Too long, much too long, has my life been a burden to me!—Or, wildly looking all around her, give me but the means, and I will instantly convince you, that my honour is dearer to me than my life!

Then, with still folded hands, and fresh-streaming eyes, I was her *blessed Lovelace*; and she would thank me with her latest breath, if I would permit her to make that preference, or free her from farther indignities.

I sat suspended for a moment: By my soul, thought I, thou art, upon full proof, an angel and no woman? Still, however, close clasping her to my bosom, as I had raised her from her knees, she again slid through my arms, and dropt upon them:—‘ See, ‘ Mr. Lovelace?—Good God! that I should live to ‘ see this hour and to bear this treatment?—See, at ‘ your feet a poor creature, imploring your pity, ‘ who, for your sake, is abandon'd of all the world! ‘ Let not my father's curse thus dreadfully operate! ‘ Be not *you* the inflicter, who have been the *cause* ‘ of it! But spare me! I beseech you spare me!—

‘ For

‘ For how have I deserved this treatment, from you ? — For your own sake if not for my sake, and as you would that God Almighty, in your last hour should have mercy upon you, spare me ! —

What heart but must have been penetrated.

I would again have raised the dear suppliant from her knees ; but she would not be raised, till my softened mind, she said, had yielded to her prayer, and bid her rise to be innocent.

Rise then, my angel, rise, and be what you are, and all you wish to be ! Only pronounce me pardoned for what has passed, and tell me you will continue to look upon me with that eye of favour and serenity, which I have been blessed with for some days past, and I will submit to my beloved conquerress, whose power never was at so great an height with me, as now ; and retire to my apartment.

God Almighty, said she, hear your prayers in your most arduous moments, as you have heard mine ; And now leave me, this moment leave me, to my own recollection : In *that* you will leave me to misery enough, and more than you ought to wish to your bitterest enemy.

Impute not every thing, my best beloved, to design ; for design it was not —

O Mr. Lovelace ! —

Upon my soul, Madam, the fire was real — (And so it was, Jack !) — The house might have been consumed by it, as you will be convinced in the morning by ocular demonstration.

O Mr. Lovelace ! —

Let my passion for you, Madam, and the unexpected meeting of you at your chamber-door, in an attitude so charming —

Leave me, leave me, this moment ! — I beseech you, leave me, looking wildly, and in confusion, now about her, and now upon herself.

Excuse

Excuse me, dearest creature for those liberties, which, innocent as they were, your too great delicacy may make you take amiss.

No more ! No more !—Leave me, I beseech you ! Again looking upon herself, and around her, in a sweet confusion.—Begone ! Begone !—Then weeping, she struggled vehemently to withdraw her hands, which all the while I held between mine.—Her struggles ! O what additional charms as I now reflect, did her struggles give to every feature, every limb, of a person so sweetly elegant and lovely !

Impossible ! my dearest life. till you pronounce my pardon !—Say but you forgive me !—Say you do !

I beseech you begone ! Leave me to myself, that I may think what I *can* do, and what I *ought* to do.

That, my dearest creature is not enough. You must tell me, that I am forgiven ; that you will see me to-morrow as if nothing had happened.

And then, clasping her again in my arms, hoping she would forgive me—

I will—I do forgive you—Wretch that you are ?

Nay, my Clarissa ? And is it such a reluctant pardon, mingled with a word so upbraiding, that I am to be put off with, when you are thus (clasping her close to me) in my power ?

I do, I *do*, forgive you ?

Heartily ?

Yes, heartily ?

And freely ?

Freely ?

And will you look upon me to-morrow, as if nothing had passed ?

Yes, yes ?

I cannot take these peevish affirmatives, so much like intentional negatives ?—Say you will, upon your honour ?

Upon

Upon my honour then—O now, begone? begone? begone? and never—

What, never, my angel?—Is this forgiveness? Never, said she, let what is passed be remembered more?

I insisted upon one kiss to seal my pardon—And retired like a fool, a woman's fool, as I was;—I sneakingly retired?—Couldst thou have believed it?

But I had no sooner entered my own apartment, than, reflecting upon the opportunity I had lost, and that all I had gained was but an increase of my own difficulties; and upon the ridicule I should meet with below, upon a weakness so much out of my usual character; I repented, and hastened back, in hope, that through the distress of mind which I left her in, she had not soon fastened the door; and I was fully resolved to execute all my purposes, be the consequence what it would; for, thought I, have already sinned beyond *cordial* forgiveness, I doubt; and fits and desperations ensue, I can but marry at last, and then I shall make her amends.

But I was justly punished;—for her door was fast: And hearing her sigh and sob, as if her heart would burst, My beloved creature, said I, rapping gently, and her sobs ceasing, I want but to say three words to you, which must be the most acceptable you ever heard from me. Let me see you but for one moment.

I thought I heard her coming to open the door, and my heart leapt in that hope; but it was only to draw another bolt, to make it still the faster, and she either could not, or would not, answer me, but retired to the further end of her apartment, to her closet probably: And more like a fool than before, again I sneaked away.

This was my mine, my plot—And this was all I made of it?

I love

I love her more than ever?—And well I may?—Never saw I such polished ivory as her arms and shoulders seemed to be; never touched I velvet so soft as her skin: Then such an elegance? O Belford, she is all perfection? Her pretty foot, in her struggling, losing her shoe, but just slipped on, as I told thee, equally white and delicate, as the hand of any other lady, or even as her own hand!

But seest thou not, that I have a claim of merit for a grace that every-body hitherto had denied me? And that is, for a capacity of being moved by prayers and tears: Where, where, on this occasion, was the *callus*, where the flint, that my heart was said to be surrounded by?

This, indeed, is the first instance, in the like case, that ever I was wrought upon. But why? Because I never before encountered a resistance so much in earnest: A resistance, in short so irresistible.

What a triumph has her sex obtained in my thoughts by this trial, and this resistance!

But if she can *now* forgive me—*Can!*—She *must*. Has she not upon her honour already done it?—But how will the dear creature keep that part of her promise, which engages her to see me in the morning, as if nothing had happened?

She would give the world, I fancy, to have the first interview over!—She had not best reproach me!—Yet *not* to reproach me!—What a charming puzzle! Let her break her word with me at her peril. Fly me she cannot: No appeals lie from my tribunal.—What friend has she in the world, if my compassion exert not itself in her favour?—And then the worthy Captain Tomlinson, and her Uncle Harlowe, will be able to make all up for me, be my next offence what it will.

As to thy apprehensions of her committing any rashness upon herself, whatever she might have done

in

in her passion, if she could have seized upon her scissars, or found any other weapon, I dare say, there is no fear of that from her *deliberate* mind. A man has trouble enough with these truly pious, and truly virtuous girls [Now I believe there are such]; he had need to have some benefit *from*, some security *in*, the rectitude of their minds.

In short, I fear nothing in this lady but grief; yet that's a slow worker, you know; and gives time to pop in a little joy between its fullen fits.

LETTER LI.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Thursday morning, Eight o'clock.

HER chamber-door has not yet been opened. I must not expect she will breakfast with me: Nor dine with me, I doubt. A little silly soul, what troubles does she make to herself by her over-niceness—All I have done to her, would have been looked upon as a frolick only, a romping-bout, and laughed off by nine parts in ten of the sex accordingly. The more she makes of it, the more painful to herself, as well as to me.

Why now, Jack, were it not better, upon *her own* notions, that she seemed not so sensible, as she will make herself to be, if she is very angry?

But perhaps I am more afraid than I need. I believe I am. From her *over-niceness* arises my fear, more than from any extraordinary reason for resentment. Next time, she may count herself very happy, if she comes off no worse.

The dear creature was so frightened, and so fatigued last night, no wonder she lies it out this morning.

I hope

I hope she has had more rest than I have had: Soft and balmy, I hope, have been her slumbers, that she may meet me in tolerable temper. All sweetly blushing and confounded—I know how she will look!—But why should she, the sufferer be ashamed, when I, the trespasser, am not?

But custom is a prodigious thing. The ladies are told how much their blushes heighten their graces: The practise for them therefore: Blushes come as readily when they call them, as their tears: Ay, that's it! While we men, taking blushes for a sign of guilt or sheepishness, are equally studious to suppress them.

By my troth, Jack, I am half as much ashamed to see the woman below, as my fair one can be to see me. I have not yet opened my door, that I may not be obtruded upon by them.

After all, what devils may one make of the Sex! To what a height of—What shall I call it?—must those of it be arrived, who once loved a man with so much distinction, as both Polly and Sally loved me, and yet can have got so much above the pangs of jealousy, so much above the mortifying reflections that arise from dividing and sharing with new objects, the affections of him they prefer to all others, as to wish for, and promote a competitorship in his love, and make their supreme delight consist in reducing others to their level!—For thou canst not imagine how even Sally Martin rejoiced last night in the thought that the lady's hour was approaching.

Past Ten o'clock.

I NEVER long'd in my life for any thing with so much impatience, as to see my charmer. She has been stirring, it seems, these two hours.

Dorcas just now tapped at her door, to take her morning commands.

She had none for her, was the answer.

She

She desired to know, if she would not breakfast? A sullen and low-voiced *negative* she received. I will go myself.

THREE different times tapped I at the door, but had no answer.

Permit me, dearest creature, to inquire after your health. As you have not been seen to-day, I am impatient to know how you do.

Not a word of answer; but a deep sigh, even, to sobbing.

Let me beg of you, Madam, to accompany me up another pair of stairs—You'll rejoice to see what a happy escape we have all had.

A happy escape indeed, Jack!—For the fire had scorched the window-board, singed the hangings, and burnt thro' the slit-deal lining of the window-jambs.

No answer, Madam!—Am I not worthy of one word?—Is it thus you keep your promise with me?—Shall I not have the favour of your company for two minutes, only for two minutes in the dining-room?

Hem!—And a deep sigh!—was all the answer.

Answer me, but how you do! Answer me but that you are well!—Is this the forgiveness that was the condition of my obedience?

Then, in a faintish but angry voice, Begone from my door!—Wretch, inhuman, barbarous, and all that's base and treacherous!—Begone from my door! Nor tease thus a poor creature, intitled to protection, not outrge.

Well, Madam, I see how you keep your word with me!—If a sudden impulse, the effects of an unthought-of accident, cannot be forgiven—

O the dreadful weight of a father's curse, thus in the letter of it, so likely to be fulfilled!

And then her voice dying away into inarticulate murmurs, I looked through the key-hole, and saw her on her knees, her face, tho' not towards me, lifted up, as well as hands, and these folded, deprecating, I suppose, that gloomy tyrant's curse.

I could not help being moved.

My dearest life ! admit me to your presence, but for two minutes, and confirm your promised pardon; and may lightning blast me on the spot, if I offer any thing but my penitence, at a shrine so sacred !—I will afterwards leave you for the whole day; and till to-morrow morning ; then to attend, with writings, all ready to sign a licence obtained, or, if it cannot, a minister without one. This once believe me. When you see the reality of the danger, that gave occasion, for this your unhappy resentment you will think less hardly of me. And let me beseech you to perform a promise, on which I made a reliance not altogether ungenerous.

I cannot see you ! Would to heaven I never had ! If I write, that's all I can do.

Let your writing then, my dearest life, confirm your promise. And I will withdraw in expectation of it.

Past Eleven o'clock.

JUST now she rung her bell for Dorcas ; and, with her door in her hand, only half-open'd, gave her billet for me.

How did the dear creature look, Dorcas ?

She was dressed. Turned her face quite from me. Sigh'd, as if her heart would break.

Sweet creature !—I kissed the wet wafer, and drew it from the paper with my breath.

These are the contents.—No inscriptive Sir ! No Mr. Lovelace !

I cannot see you : Nor will I, if I can help it. words cannot express the anguish of my soul on your baseness and ingratitude. If

If the circumstances of things are such, that I can have no way for reconciliation with those who would have been my natural protectors from such outrages, but through *you* (the only inducement I can have to stay a moment longer in your knowledge,) pen and ink must be, at present, the only means of communication between us

Vilest of men! and most detestable of plotters! how have I deserved from you the shocking indignities—But no more—Only for your own sake, wish not, at least for a week to come, to see

The undeservedly injured and insulted,

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

So thou seest, nothing could have stood me instead, but this plot of Tomlinson and her Uncle: To what a pretty pass, nevertheless, have I brought myself!—Had Cæsar been such a fool, he had never passed the Rubicon. But, after he *had* passed it, had he retreated, *re infecta*, intimidated by a senatorial edict, what a pretty figure would he have made in history!—I might have known, that to attempt a robbery, and put a person in bodily fear, is as punishable as if the robbery had been actually committed.

But not to see her for a week!—Dear pretty soul! how she anticipates me in every thing! The counsellor will have finished the writings, ready to sign, to-day, or to-morrow, at furthest: The licence with the parson, or the parson without the licence, must be also procured within the next four-and twenty hours: Pritchard is as good as ready with his indentures tripartite: Tomlinson is at hand, with a favourable answer from her Uncle—*Yet not to see her for a week!*—Dear sweet soul!—Her good angel is gone a journey: Is truanting at least. But nevertheless, in

thy week's time, and much less, my charmer, I doubt not to have completed my triumph !

But what vexes me of all things, is, that such an excellent creature should break her word.—Fie, fie, upon her!—But nobody is absolutely perfect!—*Tis human to err, but not to persevere*—I hope my charmer cannot be inhuman !

LETTER LII.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

King's Arms, Pallmall, Thursday Two o'clock,

SEVERAL billets passed between us before I went out, by the internuncioship of Dorcas: For which reason mine are superscribed by her married name.—She would not open her door to receive them; lest I should be near it, I suppose: So Dorcas was forced to put them under the door (after copying them for thee); and thence to take the answer. Read them, if thou wilt, at this place.

To Mrs. LOVELACE.

INDEED, my dearest life, you carry this matter too far. What will the people below who suppose us one, as to the ceremony, think of so great a niceness? Liberties so innocent; the occasion so accidental!—You will expose *yourself* as well as *me*.—Hitherto they know nothing of what has passed. And what, indeed, *has* passed, to occasion all this resentment?—I am sure, you will not, by a breach of your word of honour, give me reason to conclude, that, had I not obeyed you, I could have fared no worse.

Most sincerely do I repent the offence given to your delicacy—But must I, for so accidental an occurrence, be branded by such shocking names? *Vilest of men,* and

and *most detestable of plotters*, are hard words!—From such a Lady's pen too.

If you step up another pair of stairs, you'll be convinced, that, however *detestable* to you, I am no *plotter* in this affair.

I must insist upon seeing you, in order to take your directions upon some of the subjects that we talked of yesterday in the evening.

All that's more than necessary is too much. I claim your promised pardon, and wish to plead it on my knees.

I beg your presence in the dining-room for one quarter of an hour, and I will then leave you for the day. I am, my dearest life,

Your ever-adoring and truly penitent,

To Mr. LOVELACE.

I WILL not see you. I cannot see you. I have no directions to give you. Let providence decide for me as it pleases.

The more I reflect upon your vileness, your ingrateful, your barbarous vileness, the more I am exasperated against you.

You are the *last* person, whose judgment I would take upon what is or is not carried too far, in matters of decency.

'Tis grievous to me to write, or even to think of you at present. Urge me no more then. Once more, I will *not* see you. Nor care I, now you have made me vile to myself, what other people think of me.

To Mrs. LOVELACE.

AGAIN, Madam, I remind you of your promise: And beg leave to say, I insist upon the performance of it.

Remember, dearest creature, that the fault of a blameable person cannot warrant a fault in one more perfect. Over-niceness may be under-niceness!

I cannot reproach myself with any thing that deserves this high resentment.

I own that the violence of my passion for you might have carried me beyond fit bounds:—But that your commands and adjurations had such a power over me, at such a moment, I humbly presume to say, deserves some consideration.

You injoin me not to see you for a week. If I have not your pardon before Captain Tomlinson comes to town, what shall I say to him?

I beg once more your presence in the dining-room. By my soul, Madam, I must see you.

I want to consult you about the licence, and other particulars of great importance. The people below think us married; and I cannot talk to you, the door between us, upon such subjects.

For heaven's sake, favour me with your presence for a few minutes: And I will leave you for the day.

If I am to be forgiven, according to your promise, the earliest forgiveness must be the least painful to yourself, as well as to

Your truly contrite and afflicted,
LOVELACE.

To Mr. LOVELACE.

THE more you tease me, the worse will it be for you.

Time is wanted to consider whether I ever should think of you at all. At present, it is my sincere wish, that I may never more see you face.

All that can afford you the least shadow of favour from me, arises from the hoped-for reconciliation with my *real*, not my *Judas*-protector.

I am

I am careless at present of consequences. I hate myself: And who is it I have reason to value?—Not the man who could form a plot to disgrace his own hopes, as well as a poor friendless creature (made friendless by himself), by outrages not to be thought of with patience.

To Mrs. LOVELACE.

Madam.

I WILL go to the Commons, and proceed in every particular, as if I had not the misfortune to be under your displeasure.

I must insist upon it, that however faulty my passion, on so unexpected an incident, made me appear to a lady of your delicacy, yet my compliance with your intreaties at such a moment, as it gave you an instance of your power over me, which few men could have shewn; ought, duly considered, to entitle me to the effects of that solemn promise which was the condition of my obedience.

I hope to find you in a kinder, and, I will say, *juster* disposition on my return. Whether I get the licence, or not, let me beg of you to make the *soon* you have been pleased to bid me hope for, to-morrow morning. This will reconcile every thing, and make me the happiest of men.

The settlements are ready to sign, or will be by night.

For heaven's sake, Madam, do not carry your resentment into a displeasure so disproportionate to the offence. For that would be to expose us both to the people below; and, what is of infinite more consequence to us, to Captain Tomlinson. Let us be able, I beseech you, Madam, to assure him on his next visit, that we are one.

As I have no hope to be permitted to dine with you, I shall not return till evening: And then, I presume to say, I expect (your promise authorizes me

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As I have no hope to be permitted to dine with you, I shall not return till evening: And then, I presume to say, I expect (your promise authorizes me

to use the word) to find you disposed to bless, by
your consent for to-morrow, Your adoring

LOVELACE.

WHAT pleasure did I propose to take, how to enjoy the sweet confusion I expected to find her in, while all was so recent!—But she *must*, she *shall* see me on my return. It was better for *herself*, as well as for *me*, that she had not made so much *ado about nothing*. I must keep my anger alive, let it sink into compassion. *Love* and *Compassion*, be the provocation ever so great, are hard to be separated: While *Anger* converts what would be *Pity* without it, into *Resentment*. Nothing can be lovely in a man's eye, with which he is thoroughly displeased.

I ordered Dorcas, on putting the last billet under the door, and finding it taken up, to tell her, that I hoped an answer to it before I went out.

Her reply was her verbal, *Tell him that I care not whether he goes, nor what he does*.—And this, re-urged by Dorcas, was all she had to say to me.

I looked thro' her keyhole at my going by her door, and saw her on her knees, at her bed's feet, her head and bosom on the bed, her arms extended [sweet creature!] and in an agony she seemed to be sobbing, as I heard at that distance, as if her heart would break.—By my soul, Jack, I am a pity-ful fellow. Recollection is my enemy!—Divine excellence!—Happy for so many days together!—Now so unhappy!—And for what?—But she is purity itself.—And why, after all, should I thus torment—But I must not trust myself with myself, in the humour I am in.

WAITING here for Mowbray and Mallory, by whose aid I am to get the licence, I took papers out of my pocket, to divert myself; and thy last popt itself officially the first into my hand. I gave it the honour.

honour of a re-perusal; and this revived the subject with me, which I had resolved not to trust myself with.

I remember, that the dear creature, in her torn answer to my proposals, says, *That condescension is not meanness.* She better knows how to make this out, than any mortal breathing. Condescension, indeed, *implies* dignity: And dignity ever was there in *her* condescension. Yet such a dignity, as gave grace to the condescension; for there was no pride, no insult, no apparent superiority, indicated by it. This Miss Howe confirms to be a part of her general character.

I can tell her, how she might behave, to make me her own for ever. She knows she cannot fly me. She knows she must see me sooner or later; the sooner the more gracious.---I would allow her to resent (not because the liberties I took with her require resentment, were she not a CLARISSA; but as it becomes her particular nice ness to resent): But would she shew more *Love* than *Abhorrence* of me in her resentment; would she *seem*, if it were *but to seem*, to believe the fire no device, and all that follow merely accidental; and descend, upon it, to tender expostulation and upbraiding for the advantage I would have taken of her surprize; and would she, at last, be satisfied (as *well* she may), that it was attended with no further consequence; and place some generous confidence in my honour [Power loves to be trusted, Jack]; I think I would put an end to all her trials, and pay her my vows at the altar.

Yet, to have taken such bold steps, as with Tom. Henson and her uncle—To have made such a progress—O Belford, Belford, how have I puzzled myself as well as her!—This cursed aversion to wedlock how has it intangled me!—What contradictions has it not made me guilty of!

How pleasing to myself to look back upon the happy days I gave her ; though mine would doubtless have been more unmixedly so, could I have determined to lay aside my contrivances, and to be as sincere all the time, as she deserved that I should be !

If I find this humour hold but till to-morrow morning [And it has now lasted two full hours, and I seem, methinks, to have *pleasure* in encouraging it], I will make thee a visit, I think, or get thee to come to me ; and then I will consult thee upon it.

But she will not trust me. She will not confide in my honour. Doubt, in this case, is defiance. She loves me not well enough, to forgive me generously. She is so greatly above me ! How can I forgive her for a merit so mortifying to my pride ! She *thinks*, she *knows*, she has *told me*, that she is above me. These words are still in my ears, ‘ Begone, Lovelace !—‘ My soul is above thee, man !—Thou hast a proud heart to contend with !—My soul is above thee, man.’ Miss Howe thinks her above me too. Thou, even thou, my friend, my *intimate* friend and companion, art of the same opinion. I fear her as much as I love her —How shall my pride bear these reflections ?---My wife, (as I have so often said, because it so often recurs to my thoughts) to be so *much* my superior !—Myself to be considered but as the second person in my own family ;—Canst thou teach me to bear such a reflection as this !---To tell me of my acquisition in her, and that she, with all her excellencies, will be *mine* in full property, is a mistake—It cannot be so—For shall I not be *hers* ; and not *my own* ?—Will not every act of her duty (as I cannot deserve it) be a condescension, and a triumph over me ?—And must I owe it merely to her *goodness*, that she does not despise me ?—To have her condescend to bear with my follies ! To wound me with an eye of pity !—A daughter of the Harlowes thus to ex-

cel

cel the last, and, as I have heretofore said, not the meanest of the Lovelaces—Forbid it! —

Yet forbid it not—For do I not now---do I not every moment—see her before me all over charms, and elegance, and purity, as in the struggles of the past midnight? And in these struggles, heart, voice, eyes, hands, and sentiments, so greatly, so gloriously consistent with the character she has sustained from her cradle to the present hour?

But what advantages do I give thee?

Yet have I not always done her justice? Why then thy teasing impertinence?

However, I forgive thee, Jack—Since (so much generous love am I capable of!) I had rather all the world should condemn *me*, than that *her* character should suffer the least impeachment.

The dear creature herself once told me, that there was a strange mixture in my mind.

I have been called *Devil*, and *Beelzebub*, between the two proud beauties: I must indeed be a Beelzebub, if I had not some tolerable qualities.

But a Miss Howe says, her *suffering-time* is her *shining-time*. Hitherto she has done nothing but shine.

She called me *villain*, Belford, within these few hours. And what is the sum of the present argument; but that had *last* been a villain in her sense of the word, she had not so much an *angel*?

O Jack, Jack! This midnight attempt has made me mad; has utterly undone me! How can the dear creature say, I have made her vile in her *own* eyes, when her behaviour under such a surprize, and her resentment, under such circumstances, have so greatly exalted her in *mine*?

Whence, however, this strange rhapsody?—owing to my being *here*? That I am not at *Sinclair's*? But if there be infection in that house, how has *my* Beloved escaped it?

But no more in this strain!—I will see what her behaviour will be on my return—Yet already do I begin to apprehend some little sinkings, some little retrogradations; for I have just now a doubt arisen, whether, for *her own* sake, I should wish her to forgive me *lightly*, or with *difficulty*?

I AM in a way to come at the wish'd for licence.

I have now given every-thing between my beloved and me a full consideration; and my puzzle is over. What has brought me to a speedier determination, is that I think I have found out what she means by the *week's* distance she intends to hold me at: It is, that she may have time to write to Miss Howe, to put in motion that cursed scheme of hers, and to take measures upon it, which shall enable her to abandon and renounce me for ever—Now, Jack, if I obtain not admission to her presence on my return; but am refused with haughtiness; if her *week* be insisted upon (such prospects before her); I shall be confirmed in my conjecture; and it will be plain to me, that weak at best was that Love, which could give place to punc-tilio, at a time that the all-reconciling ceremony (so she must think) waits her command:—Then will I recollect all her perversencies; then will I re-peruse Miss Howe's letters, and the transcripts from others of them; and give way to my aversion to the life of shackles; And then shall she be mine in my own way

But after all, I am in hopes, that she will have better considered of every-thing by the evening. That her threat of a *week's* distance was thrown out in the heat of passion; and that she will allow, that I have as much cause to quarrel with her for breach of her word, as she has with me for breach of the peace.

These lines of Rowe have got into my head; and I shall repeat them very devoutly all the way the chairmen shall poppet me towards her by-and-by.

Teach

*Teach me, some power, the happy art of speech,
To dress my purpose up in gracious words ;
Such as may softly steal upon her soul,
And never waken the tempestuous passions.*

LETTER LIII.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

Thursday Evening, June 8.

O FOR a curse to kill with !—Ruin'd ! Undone !
Outwitted, trick'd—Zounds, man, the lady is gone
off!—Absolutely gone off!—Escap'd !—

Thou knowest not, nor canst conceive, the pangs
that wring my heart !—What can I do !—O Lord,
O Lord, O Lord !

And thou, too, who hast endeavoured to weaken
my hands, wilt but clap thy dragon's wings at the
tidings !—

Yet I must write, or I shall go distracted. Little
less have I been than these two hours ; dispatching
messengers to every stage ; to every inn ; to every wag-
gon or coach, whether flying or creeping, and to
every house with a bill up, for five miles round.

The little hypocrite, who knows not a soul in this
town [*I thought I was sure of her at any time*], such
an unexperienced traitress ; giving me hope too, in her
first billet, that her expectation of the family-recon-
ciliation would with-hold her from taking such a step
at this—Curse upon her contrivances !—I thought,
that it was owing to her bashfulness, to her modesty,
that, after a few innocent freedoms, she could not
look me in the face ; when, all the while, she was
impudently [yes, I say *impudently*, though she be a
Clarissa Harlowe ;] contriving to rob me of the dearest
property

property I had ever purchased—Purchased by a painful servitude of many months; fighting through the wild beasts of her family for her, and combating with a wind-mill virtue, that hath cost me millions of perjuries only to attempt; and which now, with its damn'd air-fans, has tost me a mile and a half beyond hope!—And this, just as I had arrived within view of the consummation of all my wishes!

O Devil of Love! God of Love no more!—How have I deserved this of thee!—Never before the friend of frozen virtue!—Powerless dæmon, for powerless thou must be, if thou meanest not to play me booty; who shall henceforth kneel at thy altars!—May every enterprizing heart abhor, despise, execrate, renounce thee, as I do.—But what signifies cursing now!

How she could effect this her wicked escape, is my astonishment; the whole sisterhood having charge of her—For, as yet, I have not had patience enough to inquire into the particulars, nor to let a soul of them approach me.

Of this I am sure, *or I had not brought her hither.* There is not a creature belonging to this house, that could be corrupted either by virtue or remorse: The highest joy every infernal nymph of this worse than infernal habitation, *could* have known, would have been to reduce this proud Beauty to her own level.—And as to my villain, who also had charge of her, he is such a season'd varlet, that he delights in mischief for the sake of it: No bribe could seduce him to betray his trust, were there but wickedness in it!—'Tis well, however, he was out of my way, when the cursed news was imparted to me!—Gone, the villain! in quest of her: Not to return, nor to see my face (so it seems he declared), till he has heard some tidings of her; and all the out-of place varlets of his numerous

numerous acquaintance, are summoned and employed in the same business.

To what purpose brought I this angel [angel I must yet call her!] to this hellish house?—And was I not meditating to do her deserved honour? by my soul, Belford, I was resolved—But thou knowest what I had *conditionally* resolved—And now, tho' I was determined so much in her favour, who can tell what hands she may have fallen into?

I am mad, stark mad, by Jupiter, at the thoughts of this!—Unprovided, destitute, unacquainted—some villain, worse than myself, who adores her not as I adore her, may have seized her, and taken advantage of her distress!—Let me perish, Belford, if a whole hecatomb of *innocents*, as the little plagues are called, shall atone for the broken promise and wicked artifices of this cruel creature.

COMING home with resolutions so favourable to her, judge thou of my distraction, when her escape was first hinted to me, although but in broken sentences. I knew not what I said, nor what I did; I wanted to kill some-body. I flew out of one room into another, while all avoided me but the veteran Betty Carberry, who broke the matter to me: I charged bribery and corruption, in my first fury, upon all; and threatened destruction to old and young, as they should come in my way.

Dorcas continues *locked* up from me: Sally and Polly have not yet dared to appear: The vile Sinclair—

But here comes the odious devil: She taps at the door, though that's only a-jar, whining and snuffling, to try, I suppose, to coax me into temper.

WHAT a helpless state, where a man can only ex-
trate himself and others; the occasion of his rage re-
maining.

maining; the evil increasing upon reflection; time itself conspiring to deepen it!—O how I cursed her?

I have her now, methinks, before me blubbering—How odious does sorrow make an ugly face!—Thine Jack, and this old beldam's, in penitentials, instead of moving compassion, must evermore confirm hatred; while Beauty in tears, is beauty heighten'd, and what my heart has ever delighted to see.—

What excuse!—Confound you, and your cursed daughters, what excuse can you make!—Is she not gone!—Has she not escap'd!—But before I am quite distracted!—before I commit half a hundred murders, let me hear how it was.

I HAVE heard her story!—Art, damn'd, confounded, wicked, unpardonable Art, in a woman of her character—But shew me a woman, and I'll shew thee a plotter!—This plaguy sex is *Art* itself: Every individual of it is a plotter by nature.

This is the substance of the old wretch's account.

She told me, ‘That I had no sooner left the vile house, than Dorcas acquainted the Syren’ [Do, Jack, let me call her names!—I beseech thee Jack, let me call her names!] ‘than Dorcas acquainted her lady with it; and that I had left word, that I was gone to Doctors-Commons and should be heard of for some hours at the Horn there, if inquired after by the counsellor, or any-body else: That afterwards I should be either at the Cocoa-Tree, or King’s-Arms; and should not return till late. She then urged her to take some refreshment.’

‘She was in tears, when Dorcas approached her; saucy eyes swelled with weeping: She refused either to eat or drink; sighed as if her heart would break.’ False, devilish grief! not the humble, fit grief, that only deserves pity!—Contriving to

ruin

ruin me, to despoil me of all that I held valuable, in the very midst of it!

‘ Nevertheless, being resolved not to see me for a week at least, she ordered her to bring her up three or four French rolls, with a little butter, and a decanter of water; telling her, she would dispense with her attendance; and that should be all she would live upon in the interim. So, artful creature! pretending to lay up for a week’s siege!—For, as to substantial food, she, no more than other angels—Angels, said I!—The devil take me, if she shall be any more an angel!—For she is odious in my eyes; and I hate her mortally!—

But oh! Lovelace, thou lyest!—She is all that is lovely! All that is excellent!—

But is she, *can* she, be gone!—O how Miss Howe will triumph!—But if that little Fury receive her, Fate shall make me rich amends; for then will I contrive to have them both.

I was looking back for connexion—but the devil take connexion; I have no business with it: The contrary best befits distraction, and that will soon be my lot!

‘ Dorcas consulted the old wretch about obeying her: O yes, by all means, for Mr. Lovelace knew how to come at her at any time; and directed a bottle of sherry to be added.

‘ This cheerful compliance so obliged her, that she was prevailed upon to go up, and look at the damage done by the fire; and seemed not only shocked at it, but satisfied it was no trick, as she owned she had at first apprehended it to be. All this made them secure; and they laughed in their sleeves, to think what a childish way of shewing her resentment, she had found out; Sally throwing out her witticisms, that Mrs. Lovelace was right, however, *not to quarrel with her bread and butter.*’

Now

Now this very childishness, as *they* thought it, in such a genius, would have made *me* suspect either her head, after what had happened the night before; or her intention, when the marriage was, so far as she knew, to be completed within the week. She was resolved to secret herself from *me* in the same house.

‘ She sent Will, with a letter to Wilson’s directed to Miss Howe, ordering him to inquire if there were not one for her there.

‘ He only pretended to go, and brought word there was none; and put her letter in his pocket for *me*.

‘ She then order’d him to carry another (which she gave him) to the Horn-Tavern to *me*.—All this done without any seeming hurry; yet she appeared to be very solemn; and put her handkerchief frequently to her eyes.

‘ Will, pretended to come to *me*, with this letter; but tho’ the dog had the sagacity to mistrust something, on her sending him out a second time (and to *me*, whom she had refused to see); which he thought extraordinary; and mentioned his mistrusts to Sally, Polly, and Dorcas; yet they made light of his suspicions; Dorcas assuring them all, that her Lady seemed more stupid with her grief, than active; and that she really believed she was a little turned in her head, and knew not what she did.— But all of them depended upon her inexperience, her open temper, and upon her not making the least motion towards going out, or to have a coach, or chair called, as sometimes she had done; and still more upon the preparations she had made for a week’s siege, as I may call it.

‘ Will, went out, pretending to bring the letter to *me*; but quickly returned; his heart still misgiving him; on recollecting my frequent cautions, that he was not to judge for himself, when he had *positive* orders; but if any doubt occurred, from circum-

stances.

stances I could not foresee, literally to follow them, as the only way to avoid blame.

‘ But it must have been in this little interval, that she escaped; for soon after his return, they made fast the street-door and hatch, the mother and the two nymphs taking a little turn into the garden; Dorcas going up stairs, and Will. (to avoid being seen by his lady, or his voice heard) down into the kitchen.

‘ About half an hour after, Dorcas, who had planted herself where she could see her Lady’s door open, had the curiosity to go to look through the key-hole, having a misgiving, as she said, that her Lady might offer some violence to herself, in the mood she had been in all day; and finding the key in the door, which was not very usual, she tapped at it three or four times, and having no answer, opened it, with Madam, Madam, did you call?— Supposing her in her closet.

‘ Having no answer, she stept forward, and was astonished to find her not there: She hastily ran into the dining-room, then into my apartments, searched every closet; dreading all the time to behold some sad catastrophe.

‘ Not finding her any-where, she ran down to the old creature, and her nymphs, with a Have you seen my Lady?— Then she’s gone!— She’s no-where above!

‘ They were sure she could not be gone out.

‘ The whole house was in an uproar in an instant; some running up stairs, some down, from the upper rooms to the lower; and all screaming. How should they look me in the face!

‘ Will. cried out, he was a dead man! He blamed them; They him; and every one was an *accuser*, and an *excuser* at the same time.

‘ When

‘ When they had searched the whole house, and every closet in it, ten times over, to no purpose: They took it into their heads to send to all the porters, chairmen, and hackey-coachmen, that had been near the house for two hours past, to inquire if any of them saw such a young Lady; describing her.

‘ This brought them some light: The only dawning for hope, that I can have, and which keeps me from absolute despair. One of the chairmen gave them this account: That he saw such a one come out of the house a little before four (in a great hurry, and as if frightened), with a little parcel tied up in a handkerchief, in her hand: That he took notice to his fellow, who plied her, without her answering that she was a fine young lady: That he'd warrant, she had either a bad husband, or very cross parents; for that her eyes seemed swelled with crying. Upon which, a third fellow replied, That it might be a Doe escaped from mother *Damnable's* park. This Mrs. Sinclair told me with a curse, and a wish, that she knew the saucy villain:—She thought, truly, that she had a better reputation; so handsomely as she lived, and so justly as she paid every-body for what she bought; her house visited by the best and civilest of gentlemen; and no noise or brawls ever heard, or known in it!

‘ From these appearances, the fellow who gave this information, had the curiosity to follow her, unperceived. She often looked back. Every-body who passed her, turned to look after her; passing their verdicts upon her tears, her hurry, and her charming person; till coming to a stand of coaches, a coachman plied her; was accepted; alighted, opened the coach-door in a hurry, seeing her hurry; and in it she stumbled for haste; and the fellow believed, hurt her shins with the stumble.’

The

The devil take me, Belford, if my generous heart is not moved for her, notwithstanding her wicked deceit, to think what must be her reflections and apprehensions at the time!—A mind so delicate, heeding no censures; yet, probably, afraid of being laid hold of by a Lovelace in every-one she saw! At the same time, not knowing to what dangers she was going to expose herself; nor of whom she could obtain shelter; a stranger to the town, and to all its ways; the afternoon far gone; but little money; and no clothes but those she had on.

It is impossible, in this little interval since last night, that Miss Howe's Townsend could be co-operating.

But how she must abhor me, to run all these risques; how heartily must she detest me, for my freedoms of last night! O that she had had greater reason for a resentment so violent!—As to her *Virtue*, I am too much enraged to give her the merit due to that: To Virtue it cannot be owing, that she should fly from the charming prospects that were before her: But to Malice, Hatred, Contempt, Harlowe-Pride, the worst of Pride, and to all the deadly passions that ever reigned in a female breast—And if I can but recover her—But be still, be calm, be hushed, my stormy passions; for is it not Clarissa (*Harlowe* must I say?), that thus I rave against?

‘The fellow heard her say, Drive fast! Very fast! Where, Madam?—To Holborn Bars, answered she; repeating, Drive very fast!—And up she pulled both the windows: And he lost sight of the coach in a minute.

‘Will, as soon as he had this intelligence, speeded away in hopes to trace her out; declaring, that he would never think of seeing me, till he had heard some tidings of his lady.’

And

And now, Belford, all my hopes is, that this fellow (who attended us in our airing to Hampstead, to High-gate, to Muzzlehill, to Kentish-Town) will hear of her at some one or other of those places.— And on this I the rather build, as I remember, she was once, after our return, very inquisitive about the stages, and their prices; praising the conveniency to passengers in their going off every hour; and this in Will's hearing, who was then in attendance. Woe be to the villain, if he recollect not this!

I HAVE been traversing her room meditating, or taking up every-thing she but touched or used: The glass she dressed at, I was ready to break, for not giving me the personal image it was wont to reflect, of *her* whose idea is for ever present with me. I call for her, now in the tenderness, now in the most reproachful terms, as if within hearing: Wanting *her*, I want my own soul, at least every-thing dear to it. What a void in my heart! what a chilness in my blood, as if its circulation were arrested! From her room to my own; in the dining room, and in and out of every place where I have seen the beloved of my heart, do I hurry; in none can I tarry; her lovely image in every-one, in some lively attitude, rushing cruelly upon me, and in differently remembered conversations.

But when in my first fury, at my return, I went up two pair of stairs, resolved to find the locked-up Dorcas, and beheld the vainly-burnt window board, and recollected my baffled contrivances, baffled by my own weak folly, I thought my distraction completed, and down I ran as one frightened at a spectre, ready to howl for vexation; my head and my temples shooting with a violence I had never felt before; and my back aching, as if the vetebræ were disjointed, and falling in pieces.

But

But now that I have heard the mother's story, and contemplated the dawning ~~hopes~~ given by the chairman's information, I am a good deal easier, and can make cooler reflections. Most heartily pray I for Will's success, every four or five minutes. If I lose her, all my rage will return with re-doubled fury. The disgrace to be thus outwitted by a novice, an infant, in stratagem and contrivance, added to the violence of my passion for her, will either break my heart, or (what saves many a heart in evils insupportable) turn my brain. What had I to do to go out a licence-hunting, at least till I had seen her, and made up matters with her? And indeed, were it not the privilege of a principal to lay all his own faults upon his underlings, and never be to blame himself, I should be apt to reflect, that I am more in fault than anybody. And as the sting of this reflection will sharpen upon me if I recover her not, how shall I be able to bear it?

If ever—

Here Mr. Lovelace lays himself under a curse, too shocking to be repeated, if he revenge not himself upon the Lady, should he once more get her into his hands.

I HAVE just now dismissed the sniveling toad Dorcas, who was introduced to me for my pardon by the whining mother. I gave her a kind of negative and ungracious forgiveness.—Yet I shall as violently curse the two nymphs, by-and-by, for the consequences of my own folly: And this will be a good way too, to prevent their ridicule upon me, for losing so glorious an opportunity as I had last night, or rather this morning.

I have collected, from the result of the inquiries made of the chairman, and from Dorcas's observations

tions before the cruel creature escaped, a description of her dress; and am resolved, if I cannot otherwise hear of her, to advertise her in the Gazette, as an eloped wife, both by her maiden and acknowledged name; for her elopement will soon be known by every *Enemy*, why then should not my *Friends* be made acquainted with it, from whose inquiries and informations I may expect some tidings of her?

She had on a brown lutestring night-gown, fresh, and looking like new, as every thing she wears does, whether new or not, from an elegance natural to her. A beaver hat, a black ribband about her neck, and blue knots on her breast. A quilted petticoat of carnation-coloured fatten; a rose-diamond ring, supposed on her finger; and in her whole person and appearance, as I shall express it, a dignity, as well as beauty, that commands the repeated attention of every one who sees her.

The description of her person, I shall take a little more pains about. My mind must be more at ease, before I can undertake that. And I shall threaten, that if, after a certain period given for her voluntary return, she be not heard of, I will prosecute any person, who presumes to entertain, harbour, abett, or encourage her, with all the vengeance than an injur'd gentleman and husband may be warranted to take by Law, or otherwise.

FRESH cause of aggravation!—But for this scribbling vein, or I should still run mad!

Again going into her chamber, because it was hers, and sighing over the bed, and every piece of furniture in it, I cast my eye towards the drawers of the dressing-glass, and saw peep out, as it were, in one of the half-drawn drawers, the corner of a letter. I snatched it out, and found it superscribed by her, *To Mr. Lovelace.*

Lovelace. The sight of it made my heart leap, and I trembled so, that I could hardly open the seal.

How does this damn'd Love unman me!—But nobody ever loved as I love!—It is even increased by her unworthy flight, and my disappointment. Ingrateful creature, to fly from a passion thus ardently flaming! which, like the palm, rises the more for being depressed and slighted!

I will not give thee a copy of this letter, I owe her not so much service.

But wouldst thou think, that this haughty promise-breaker could resolve, as she does, absolutely and for ever to renounce me for what passed last night? That she could resolve to forego all her opening prospects of reconciliation; *that* reconciliation with a worthless family, on which she had set her whole heart?— Yet she does!—She acquits me of all obligation to her, and herself of all expectations from me! And for what?—O that indeed I had given her real cause! Damn'd confounded Niceness, Prudery, Affectation, or pretty Ignorance, if not affectation!—By my soul, Belford, I told thee all—I was more indebted to her struggles, than to my own forwardness. I cannot support my own reflections upon a decency so ill-requited.—She could not, she would not have been so much a Harlowe in her resentment had I deserved, as I ought to have done, her resentment. All she feared, had then been over, and her own good-sense, and even modesty, would have taught her to make the best of it.

But if ever again I get her into my hands, *Art* and more *Art*, and *Compulsion* too, if she make it necessary [*and 'tis plain that nothing else will do*], shall she experience from the man whose fear of her has been above even his passion for her; and whose gentleness and forbearance she has thus *perfidiously* triumphed over. Well says the Poet,

*'Tis nobler like a lion to invade
When appetite directs, and seize my prey,
Than to wait tamely, like a begging dog,
Till dull consent throws out the scraps of love.*

Thou knowest what I have so lately vowed—And yet, at times [cruel creature, and ingrateful as cruel!], I can subscribe with too much truth to those lines of another Poet :

*She reigns more fully in my soul than ever ;
She garrisons my breast, and mans against me
Ev'n my own rebel thoughts, with thousand graces,
Ten thousand charms, and new-discover'd beauties !*

LETTER LIV.

Mr. LOVELACE, To JOHN BELFORD, Esq;

A LETTER is put into my hands by Wilson himself—

Such a letter !

A letter from Miss Howe to her cruel friend !—

I made no scruple to open it.

It is a miracle that I fell not into fits at the reading of it ; and at the thought of what might have been the consequence, had it come to the hands of *this Clarissa Harlowe*. Let my justly-excited rage excuse my irreverence.

Collins, tho' not his day, brought it this afternoon to Wilson's, with a particular desire, that it might be sent with all speed to Miss Beaumont's lodgings, and given, if possible into her own hands. He had before been here (at Mrs. Sinclair's) with intent to deliver it to her himself; but was told [too truly told!], that she was abroad ; but that they would give her any

thing

thing he should leave for her, the moment she returned.—But he cared not to trust them with his business, and went away to Wilson's (as I find by the description of him at both places), and there left the letter; but not till he had a second time called here, and found her not come in.

The letter (which I shall inclose; for it is too long to transcribe) will account to thee for his coming hither.

O this devilish Miss Howe!—Something must be resolved upon, and done with that little Fury!

THOU wilt see the margin of this cursed letter crowded with indices. I put them to mark the places devoted for vengeance, or requiring animadversion. Return thou it to me the moment thou hast read it.

Read it here; and avoid trembling for me, if thou canst.

To Miss LÆTITIA BEAUMONT.

My dearest Friend,

Wednesday, June 7.

YOU will perhaps think that I have been too long silent. But I had begun two letters at different times since my last, and written a great deal each time; and with spirit enough, I assure you; incensed as I was against the abominable wretch you are with; particularly on reading yours of the 21st of the past month.

The *first* I intended to keep open till I could give you some account of my proceedings with Mrs. Townsend. It was some days before I saw her: And this intervening space giving me time to re-peruse what I had written, I thought it proper to lay that aside, and to write in a style a little less fervent; for you would have blamed me, I know for the freedom of some of my expressions (*execrations*, if you please.) And when I had gone a good way in the *second*, the

change in your prospects, on his communicating to you Miss Montague's letter, and his better behaviour, occasioning a change in your mind, I laid that aside also. And in this uncertainty, thought I would wait to see the issue of affairs between you, before I wrote again; believing that all would soon be decided one way or other.

I had still perhaps, held this resolution, (as every appearance, according to your letters, was more and more promising), had not the two passed days furnished me with intelligence which it highly imports you to know.

But I must stop here, and take a little walk, to try to keep down that just indignation which rises to my pen, when I am about to relate to you what I must communicate.

I am not my own mistress enough—Then my mother—Always up and down—And watching as if I were writing to a fellow—But I will try if I can contain myself in tolerable bounds.—

The women of the house where you are—O my dear—The women of the house—But you never thought highly of them.—So it cannot be so very surprizing—Nor would you have staid so long with them, had not the notion of removing to one of your own, made you less uneasy, and less curious about their characters, and behaviour. Yet I could now wish, that you had been less reserved among them—But I tease you—In short, my dear, you are certainly in a devilish house!—Be assured, that the woman is one of the vilest of women!—Nor does she go to you by her right name—Very true—Her name is *not* Sinclair—Nor is the street she lives in, Dover-street.—Did you never go out by yourself, and discharge the coach or chair, and return by another coach or chair? If you did (yet I don't remember that you

you ever wrote to me, that you did), you would never have found your way to the vile house, either by the woman's name, *Sinclair*, or by the street's name, mentioned by that Doleman in his letter about the lodgings.

The wretch might indeed have held out these false lights a little more excusably, had the house been an honest house; and had his end only been to prevent mischief from your brother—But this contrivance was antecedent, as I think, to your brother's project: so that no excuse can be made for his intentions at the time—The man, whatever he may now intend, was certainly then, even then, a villain in his heart!

I AM excessively concerned, that I should be prevailed upon, between *your* over-niceness on one hand, and my *mother's* positiveness, on the other, to be satisfied without knowing how to direct to you at your lodgings. I think too, that the proposal that I should be put off to a *third-hand* knowledge, or rather veiled in a *first-hand* ignorance, came from him—and that it was only acquiesced in by you, as it was by me, upon needless and weak considerations—Because, truly, I might have it to say, if challenged, that I knew not where to send to you!—I am ashamed of myself!—Had this been at *first* excusable, it could not be a good reason for going on in the folly, when you had no liking to the house, and when he began to play tricks, and delay with you.—What I was to mistrust myself, was I?—I was to allow it to be thought, that I could not keep my own secret?—But the house to be taken at this time, and at that time, led us both on—like fools, like tame fools in a string.—Upon my life, my dear, this man is a vile, a contemptible villain—I must speak out!—How has he laugh'd in his sleeve at us both, I warrant, for I can't tell how long!

And yet who could have thought, that a man of fortune, and some *reputation* [This Doleman, I mean; not your wretch, to be sure!]—formerly a Rake indeed—[I have inquired after him—long ago; and so was the easier satisfied]—but married to a woman of family—having had a palsy-blow—and one would think a penitent—should recommend such a house—[Why, my dear, he could not *inquire* of it, but must find it to be bad]—to such a man as Lovelace, to bring his future, nay, his *then* supposed bride to?

I WRITE, perhaps, with too much violence, to be clear. But I cannot help it. Yet I lay down my pen, and take it up every ten minutes, in order to write with some temper---My mother too in and out---Why need I (she asks me) lock myself in, if I am only reading past correspondencies?—for that is my pretence, when she comes poking in with her face sharpened to an edge, as I may say, by a curiosity that gives her more pain than pleasure---The Lord forgive me; but I believe I shall huff her the next time she comes in.

Do You forgive me too, my dear. My mother *ought*; because she says, I am my father's girl; and because I am sure I am *hers*. I don't know what to do—I don't know what to write next—I have so much to write, yet have so little patience, and so little opportunity.

But I will tell you how I came by my intelligence. That being a *fact*, and requiring the less attention, I will try to account to you for *that*.

Thus then it came about—‘ Miss Lardner (whom you have seen at her cousin Bidulph's) saw you at St. James's church on Sunday was fornight. She kept you in her eye during the whole time; but could not once obtain the notice of yours, tho' she

‘ courtesy'd

‘ courtesy’d to you twice. She thought to pay her compliments to you when the service was over; for she doubted not but you were married—and for an odd reason—*because you came to church by yourself.*—

‘ Every eye, as usual, she said, was upon you; and this seeming to give you hurry, and you being nearer the door than she, you slid out, before she could get to you. But she ordered her servant to follow you, till you were housed. This servant saw you step into a chair, which waited for you; and you ordered the men to carry you to the place where they took you up.

‘ The next day, Miss Lardner sent the same servant out of mere curiosity, to make private inquiry whether Mr. Lovelace were, or were not, with you there. And this inquiry brought out, from different people, that the house was suspected to be one of those genteel wicked houses, which receive and accommodate fashionable people of both sexes.

‘ Miss Lardner confounded at this strange intelligence, made further inquiry; injoining secrecy to the servant she had sent, as well as to the gentleman whom she employed: Who had it confirmed from a rakish friend, who knew the house; and told him, that there were two houses; the one, in which all decent appearances were preserved, and guests rarely admitted; the other, the receptacle of those who were absolutely engaged, and broken to the vile yoke.—

‘ Say—my dear creature—say—Shall I not execrate the wretch?—But words are weak—What can I say, that will suitably express my abhorrence of such a villain as he must have been, when he meditated to bring a Clarissa Harlowe to such a place!

‘ Miss Lardner kept this to herself some days, not knowing what to do; for she loves you, and admires you of all women. At last, she revealed

it, but in confidence, to Miss Bidulph, by letter. Miss Bidulph, in like confidence, being afraid it would distract me, were I to know it, communicated it to Miss Lloyd; and, so, like a whisper'd scandal, it pass'd thro' several canals; and then it came to me. Which was not till last Monday.'

I thought I should have fainted upon the surprising communication. But rage taking place, it blew away the sudden illness. I besought Miss Lloyd to re-injoin secrecy to everyone. I told her, that I would not for the world, that my mother, or any of your family, should know it. And I instantly caused a trusty friend to make what inquiries he could about Tomlinson.

I had thoughts to have done it before: But not imagining it to be needful, and little thinking that you could be in such a house, and as you were pleased with your changed prospects, I forbore. And the rather forbore, as the matter is so laid, that Mrs. Hodges is supposed to know nothing of the projected treaty of accommodation; but, on the contrary, that it was designed to be a secret to her, and to every body but immediate parties; and it was Mrs. Hodges that I had proposed to sound by a *second* hand.

Now, my dear, it is certain, without applying to that too-much favoured housekeeper, that there is not such a man within ten miles of your Uncle. Very true! One *Tomkins* there is, about four miles off; but he is a day-labourer: And one *Thompson*, about five miles distant the other way; but he is a parish schoolmaster, poor, and about seventy.

A man tho' but of 800*l.* a year, cannot come from one country to settle in another, but every-body in both must know it, and talk of it.

Mrs. Hodges may yet be sounded at a distance, if you will. Your uncle is an old man. Old men imagine themselves under obligation to their paramours,

if

if younger than themselves, and seldom keep any thing from their knowledge. But if we suppose him to make a secret of the designed treaty, it is impossible, *before* that treaty was thought of, but she must have seen him, at least have *heard* your uncle speak praisefully of a man he is said to be so intimate with, let him have been ever so little a while in those parts.

Yet, methinks, the story is so plausible. Tomlinson, as you describe him, is so good a man, and so much of a gentleman; the end to be answered by his being an impostor, so much *more than necessary*, if Lovelace has villainy in his head; and as you are in such a house—Your wretch's behaviour to him was so petulant and lordly; and Tomlinson's answer so full of spirit and circumstance; and then what he communicated to you of Mr. Hickman's application to your uncle, and of Mrs. Norton's to your mother (some of which particulars, I am satisfied, his vile agent, Joseph Leman, could not reveal to his viler employer); his pressing on the marriage-day, in the name of your uncle, which it could not answer any *wicked* purpose for him to do; and what he writes of your uncle's proposal to have it thought that you were married from the time that you had lived in one house together; and that to be made to agree with the time of Mr. Hickman's visit to your uncle: The insisting on a trusty person's being present at the ceremony, at that uncle's nomination—These things make me willing to try for a tolerable construction to be made of all; tho' I am so much puzzled, by what occurs on both sides of the question, that I cannot but abhor the devilish wretch, whose inventions and contrivances are for ever employing an inquisitive head, without affording the means of absolute detection.

But this is what I am ready to conjecture, that Tomlinson, specious as he is, is a machine of Lovelace;

and that he is employed for some end which has not yet been answered.—This is certain, that not only Tomlinson, but Mennell, who, I think, attended you more than once at this vile house, must know it to be a vile house.

What can you then think of Tomlinson's declaring himself in *favour* of it, upon inquiry?

Lovelace too must know it to be so; if not before he brought you to it, soon after.

Perhaps the *company he found there*, may be—the most probable way of accounting for his bearing with the house, and for his strange suspensions of marriage, when it was in his power to call such an angel of a woman his.—

On my dear, the man is a villain! the greatest of villains, in every light!—I am convinced that he is—And this Doleman must be another of his implements!

There are so many wretches who think *that* to be no sin, which is one of the greatest, and the most ingrateful, of all sins; to ruin young creatures of our sex, who place their confidence in them; that the wonder is less than the shame, that people of figure, of *appearance*, at least, are found to promote the horrid purposes of profligates of fortune and interest!—

But can I think (you will ask, with indignant astonishment), that Lovelace can have designs upon your honour?

That such designs he *has had*, if he *still* hold them not, I can have no doubt, now that I know the house he has brought you to, to be a vile one. This is a clue that has led me to account for all his behaviour to you ever since you have been in his hands.

Allow me a brief retrospection of it all.

We both know, that Pride, Revenge, and a delight to tread in unbeaten paths, are principal ingredients in the character of this finished libertine.

He

He hates all your family, yourself excepted; and I have several times thought, that I have seen him stung and mortified, that Love has obliged him to kneel at your footstool, because you are a *Harlowe*. --- Yet is this wretch a savage in Love. --- Love that humanizes the fiercest spirits, has not been able to subdue his. His *pride*, and the credit which a few *playable qualities*, sprinkled among his *odious ones*, have secured him too good a reception from our eye-judging, our undistinguishing, our self-flattering, our too-confiding Sex, to make assiduity and obsequiousness, and a conquest of his unruly passions, any part of his study.

He has some reason for his animosity to *all* the men, and to *one* woman of your family. He has always shewn you, and all his own family too, that he prefers his *Pride* to his *Interest*. He is a declared marriage-hater: A notorious intriguer: Full of his inventions; and glorying in them. --- He never could draw you into declarations of Love: Nor, till your *wife* relations persecuted you, as they did, to receive his addresses as a Lover. --- He knew, that you professedly disliked him for his immoralities; he could not therefore justly blame you, for the coldness and indifference of your behaviour to him.

The prevention of mischief was your first main view in the correspondence he drew you into. He ought not, then, to have wonder'd, that you declared your preference of the *Single Life* to *any* matrimonial engagement. He knew, that this was *always* your preference; and that before he tricked you away so artfully. What was his conduct to you afterwards, that you should of a sudden change it?

Thus was your whole behaviour regular, consistent, and dutiful to those to whom by birth, you owed duty; and neither prudish, coquetish, nor tyrannical to him.

He had agreed to go on with you upon those your own terms, and to rely only on his own merits and future reformation, for your favour.

It was plain to me, indeed, to whom you communicated all that *you knew* of your own heart, tho' not all of it that I *found out*, that Love had pretty early gained footing in it. And this you yourself would have discovered sooner than you did had not his alarming, his unpolite, his rough conduct, kept it under.

I knew, by experience, that Love is a fire that is not to be played with without burning one's fingers : I knew it to be a dangerous thing for two single persons of different sexes, to enter into familiarity and correspondence with each other ; since, as to the latter, must not a person be capable of premeditated art, who can sit down to write, and not write from the heart ?—And a woman to write her heart to a man practised in deceit, or even to a man of some character, what advantage does it give him over her ?

As this man's vanity had made him imagine, that no woman could be proof against Love, when his address was honourable ; no wonder that he struggled, like a lion held in toils, against a passion that he thought not returned.—And how could you *at first*, shew a return in love, to so fierce a spirit, and who had seduced you away by vile artifices, but to the approval of those artifices ?

Hence, perhaps, it is not difficult to believe, that it became possible for such a wretch as this to give way to his old prejudices against marriage ; and to that Revenge which had always been a first passion with him.

This is the only way, I think, to account for his horrid views in bringing you to a vile house.

And now may not all the rest be naturally accounted for ?—His delays—His teasing ways—His bringing

ing you to bear with his lodging in the same house--- His making you pass to the people of it, as his wife; tho' restrictively so, yet with hope, no doubt (vilest of villains as he is!), to take you at advantage.---

His bringing you into the company of his libertine companions; The attempt of imposing upon you that Miss Partington for a bedfellow, very probably his own invention, for the worst of purposes; His terrifying you at many different times; His obtruding himself upon you when you went out to church; no doubt to prevent your finding out what the people were; The advantages he made of your brother's foolish project with Singleton.

See, my dear, how naturally all this follows from the discovery made by Miss Lardner.—See how the monster, whom I thought, and so often called, a *fool*, comes out to have been all the time one of the greatest villains in the world!

But if this be so, what (it would be asked by an indifferent person) has hitherto saved you? Glorious creature!—What (morally speaking) but your watchfulness! What but That, and the majesty of your virtue; *the native dignity*, which, in a situation so very difficult (friendless, destitute, passing for a wife, cast into the company of creatures accustomed to betray and ruin innocent hearts) has hitherto enabled you to baffle, over-awe, and confound, such a dangerous libertine as this; so habitually remorseless, as you have observed him to be; so very various in his temper; so inventive; so seconded, so supported, so instigated, too probably, as he has been!—That *native dignity*, that *heroism* I will call it, which has, on all proper occasions, exerted itself, in its *full lustre*, unmixed with that charming obligingness and condescending sweetnes, which is evermore the *softner* of that dignity, when your mind is free and unapprehensive!

Let

Let me stop to admire, and to bless my beloved friend, who, unhappily for herself, at an age so tender, unacquainted as she was with the world, and with the vile arts of libertines, having been called upon to sustain the hardest and most shocking trials, from persecuting Relations on one hand, and from a villainous Lover on the other, has been enabled to give such an illustrious example of fortitude and prudence, as never woman gave before her ; and who, as I have heretofore observed, has made a far greater figure in adversity, than she possibly could have made, had all her shining qualities been exerted in their full force and power, by the continuance of that prosperous run of fortune, which attended her for Eighteen years of life out of Nineteen.

BUT now, my dear, do I apprehend, that you are in greater danger than ever yet you have been in ; if you are not married in a week ; and yet stay in this abominable house. For were you out of it, I own, I should not be much afraid for you.

These are my thoughts, on the most deliberate consideration : ‘ That he is now convinced, that he has not been able to draw you off your guard : ‘ That therefore, if he can obtain no new advantage over you, as he goes along, he is resolved to do you all the *poor justice* that it is in the power of such a wretch as he, to do you. He is the rather induced to this, as he sees, that all his own family have warmly engaged themselves in your cause ; and that it is his *highest interest* to be just to you. ‘ Then the horrid wretch loves you, as well as he may, above all women. I have no doubt of this— ‘ With such a love as such a wretch is capable of : ‘ With such a love as Herod loved his Mariamne.— ‘ He is now therefore, very probably, at last, in earnest.’

I took

I took time for inquiries of different natures, as I knew by the train you are in, that whatever his designs are, they cannot ripen either for good or evil, till something shall result from this new device of his about Tomlinson and your uncle.

Device I have no doubt that it is, whatever this dark, this impenetrable spirit, intends by it.

And yet I find it to be true, that Counsellor Williams (whom Mr. Hickman knows to be a man of eminence in his profession) has actually as good as finished the settlements : That two draughts of them have been made ; one avowedly to be sent to one Captain Tomlinson, as the clerk says :—And I find, that a license has actually been more than once endeavoured to be obtained ; and that difficulties have hitherto been made, equally to Lovelace's vexation and disappointment. My mother's proctor, who is very intimate with the proctor applied to by the wretch, has come at this information in confidence ; and hints, that, as Mr. Lovelace is a man of high fortunes, these difficulties will probably be got over.

But here follow the causes of my apprehension of your danger ; which I should not have had a thought of (since nothing *very* vile has yet been attempted) but on finding what a house you are in, and on that discovery, laying together, and ruminating on past occurrences.

‘ You are obliged, from the present favourable appearances, to give him your company whenever he requests it.—You are under a necessity of forgetting, or seeming to forget, past disengagements ; and to receive his addresses as those of a betrothed lover. ‘ You will incur the censure of prudery and affection, even perhaps in your own apprehension, if you keep him at that distance which has hitherto been your security.—His sudden (and as suddenly recovered) illness, has given him an opportunity to find out

out, that you love him. [*Alas, my dear, I knew you loved him!*] He is, as you relate, every hour more and more an incroacher upon it. He has seem'd to change his nature, and is all love and gentleness. The wolf has put on the sheep's cloathing; yet more than once has shewn his teeth, and his hardly sheathed claws. The instance you have given of his freedom with your person, which you could not but resent; and yet, as matters are circumstanced between you, could not but pass over, when Tomlinson's letter called you into his company, shew the advantage he has now over you; and also, that if he can obtain greater, he will.—And for this very reason (as I apprehend) it is, that Tomlinson is introduced; that is to say, to give you the greater security, and to be a mediator, if mortal offence be given you, by any villainous attempt.—The day seems not now to be so much in your power as it ought to be, since That now partly depends on your uncle, whose presence, at your own motion, he has wished on the occasion.—A wish, were all real, very unlikely, I think, to be granted.'

And thus situated, should he offer greater freedoms, must you not forgive him?

I fear nothing (as I know who has said), that devil carnate or incarnate can fairly do against a virtue so established.—But surprises, my dear, in such a house as that you are in, and in such circumstances as I have mentioned, I greatly fear!—The man one, who has already triumphed over persons worthy of his alliance.

What then have you to do, but to fly this house, this infernal house!—O that your heart would let you *fly him!*

If you should be dispos'd so to do, Mrs. Townsend shall be ready at your command.—But if you meet with no impediments, no new causes of doubt, I think

think your reputation in the eye of the world, tho' not your happiness, is concerned, that you should be his.—And yet I cannot bear, that these libertines should be rewarded for their villainy with the best of the Sex, when the world of it are too good for them.

But if you meet with the least ground for suspicion; if he would detain you at the odious house, or wish you to stay, now you know what the people are, fly him, whatever your prospects are, as well as *them*.

In one of your next airings, if you have no other way, refuse to return with him. Name *me* for your intelligencer, that you are in a bad house; and if you think you cannot now break with him, seem rather to believe that he may not know it to be so; and that I do not believe he does: And yet this belief in us both must appear to be very gross.

But suppose you desire, and insist upon it, to go out of town for the air, this sultry weather?—You may plead your health for so doing. He dare not resist such a plea. Your brother's foolish scheme, I am told, is certainly given up; so you need not be afraid on that account.

If you do not fly the house upon reading of this, or some way or other get out of it, I shall judge of his power over you, by the little you will have over either him or yourself.

One of my informants has made slight inquiries concerning Mrs. Fretchville. Did he ever name to you the street or square she lived in?—I don't remember, that you, in any of yours, mentioned either to me. Strange, very strange, This, I think! No such person or house can be found, near any of the new streets or squares, where the lights I had from your letters led me to imagine her house might be.—Ask him, What street the house is in, if he has not told you. And let me know. If he make a difficulty of that circumstance, it will amount to a detection.—

tection. — And yet, I think, you have enough without this, or any chance now, if I should go. — I shall send this long letter by Collins, who changes his day to oblige me; and that he may try (now I know where you are), to get it into your own hands. If he cannot, he will leave it at Wilson's. As none of our letters by that conveyance have miscarried, when you have been in more *apparently* disagreeable situations than you are in at present, I hope that this will go safe, if Collins should be obliged to leave it there.

I wrote a short letter to you in my first agitations. It contained not above twenty lines, all full of fright, alarm, and execration. But being afraid, that my vehemence would too much affect you, I thought it better to wait a little, as well for the reasons already hinted at, as to be able to give you as many particulars as I could; and my thoughts upon all. And now, I think, taking to your aid other circumstances as they *have* offer'd, or *may* offer, you will be sufficiently armed to resist all his machinations, be they what they will.

One word more. Command me up, if I can be of the least service, or pleasure to you. I value not fame; I value not censure; nor even life itself, I verily think, as I do your honour, and your friendship — For, is not your honour my honour? And is not your friendship the pride of my life?

May heaven preserve you, my dearest creature, in honour and safety, is the prayer, the hourly prayer, of

Your ever-faithful and affectionate

ANNA HOWE.

Thursday, Morn. 5. I have
written all night.

To

To Miss Howe.

My dearest creature,

HOW you have shock'd, confounded, surpriz'd, astonish'd me, by your dreadful communication!—My heart is too weak to bear up against such a stroke as this!—When all hope was with me! When my prospects were so much mended!—But can there be such villainy in men, as in this vile principal, and equally vile agent!

I am really ill—Very ill—Grief and surprize, and, now I will say, despair, have overcome me!—All, all, you have laid down as conjecture, appears to me now to be *more* than conjecture!

O that your mother would have the goodness to permit me the presence of the only comforter that my afflicted, my half-broken heart, could be raised by! But I charge you, think not of coming up without her indulgent permission.—I am too ill, at present, my dear, to think of combating with this dreadful man; and of flying from this horrid house!—My bad writing will shew you this.—But my illness will be my present security, should he indeed have meditated villainy.—Forgive, O forgive me, my dearest friend, the trouble I have given you!—All must soon—But why add I grief to grief, and trouble to trouble?—But I charge you, my beloved creature, not to think of coming up, without your mother's leave, to the truly desolate, and broken-spirited

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

WELL, Jack!—And what thinkest thou of this last letter?—Miss Howe values not either *fame* or *censure*; thinkest thou, that this letter will not bring the little fury up, though she could procure no other conveyance than her higgler's paniers, one for herself, the other for her maid?—She knows where to come now!

—Many

—Many a little villain have I punished for knowing more than I would have her know ; and that by adding to her knowledge and experience.—What thinkst thou, Belford, if by getting hither this virago, and giving *cause* for a lamentable letter from her, to the fair fugitive, I should be able to recover *her*?—Would she not visit that friend in *her* distress, thinkst thou, whose intended visit to her in *hers*, brought her into the condition she herself had so perfidiously escaped from?

Let me enjoy the thought !

Shall I send this letter?—Thou seest I have left room, if I fail in the exact imitation of so charming a hand, to avoid too strict a scrutiny.—Do they not both deserve it of me?—Seest thou not how the raving girl threatens her mother?—Ought she not to be punish'd?—And can I be a worse devil, or villain, or monster, than she calls me in this letter; and has called me in her former letters; were I to punish them both, as my vengeance urges me to punish them. And when I have executed That my vengeance, how charmingly satisfied may they both go down into the country, and keep house together, and have a much better reason than their pride could give them, for living the single-life they have both seemed so fond of?

I will set about transcribing it this moment, I think. I can resolve afterwards. Yet what has poor Hickman done to deserve this of me?—But gloriously would it punish the mother (as well as daughter) for all her sordid avarice; and for her undutifulness to honest Mr. Howe, whose heart she actually broke. I am on tip-toe, Jack, to enter upon this project.—Is not one country as good to me as another, if I should be obliged to take another tour upon it?

But I will not venture. Mr. Hickman is a good man, they tell me. I love a good man. I hope one of

of these days to be a good man myself. Besides, I have heard within this week, something of this honest fellow that shews he has a soul; when I thought, if he had one, that it lay a little of the deepest to emerge to notice, except on very extraordinary occasions; and that then it presently sunk again into its *Cellula adiposa*.—The man is a *plump man*.—Didst ever see him, Jack?

But the principal reason that withholds me (for 'tis a tempting project!) is, for fear of being utterly blown up, if I should not be quick enough with my letter, or if Miss Howe should deliberate on setting out, or try her mother's consent first; in which time, a letter from my frightened beauty might reach her; for I have no doubt, where-ever she has refuged, but her first work was to write to her vixen friend. I will therefore go on patiently; and take my revenge upon the little fury at my leisure.

But, in spite of my compassion for Hickman, whose better character is sometimes my envy, and who is one of those mortals that bring clumsiness into credit with the *mothers*, to the disgrace of us clever fellows, and often to our disappointment with the *daughters*: and who has been very busy in assisting these double arm'd beauties against me; I swear by all the *Di* *Majores*, as well as *Minores*, that I will have Miss Howe, if I cannot have her more exalted friend!—And then, if there be so much flaming love between these girls as they pretend, what will my charmer profit by her escape?

And now, that I shall permit Miss Howe to reign a little longer, let me ask thee, if thou hast not, in the inclosed letter, a *fresh* instance, that a great many of my difficulties with her sister-toast are owing to this flighty girl?—'Tis true, that here was naturally a confounded sharp wintry air; and, if a little cold water was thrown into the path, no wonder that it

was

was instantly frozen ; and that a poor honest traveller found it next to impossible to keep his way ; one foot sliding back as fast as the other advanced ; to the endangering of his limbs or neck. But yet I think it impossible, that she should have baffled me as she has done (novice as she is, and never before from under her parents wing), had she not been armed by a virago, who was formerly very near shewing, that she could better advise than practise. But this, I believe, I have said more than once before.

I am loth to *reproach myself*, now the cruel creature has escaped me ; for what would that do, but add to my torment ? Since evils self-caused, and avoidable, admit not of palliation or comfort. And yet, if thou tellest me, that all *her* strength was owing to *my* weakness, and that I have been a cursed coward in this whole affair ; why then, Jack, I may blush, and be vexed ; but, by my soul, I cannot contradict thee.

But this, Belford, I hope—that if I can turn the poison of this letter into wholesome aliment ; that is to say, if I can make use of it to my advantage ; I shall have *thy* free consent to do it.

I am always careful to open covers cautiously, and to preserve seals intire. I will draw out from this cursed letter an alphabet. Nor was Nick Rowe ever half so diligent to learn Spanish, at the *Quixote* recommendation of a certain Peer, as I will be to gain a mastery of this vixen's hand.

END OF THE FOURTH VOLUME.



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